

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEMBERS' DAY HEARING

(117-11)

REMOTE HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTEENTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

APRIL 14, 2021

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CONTENTS

	Page
Summary of Subject Matter	ix
STATEMENTS OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE	
Hon. Peter A. DeFazio, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, and Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, opening statement	1
Prepared statement	3
Hon. Sam Graves, a Representative in Congress from the State of Missouri, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, opening statement	4
Prepared statement	4
Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, prepared statement	203
MEMBER TESTIMONY	
Hon. Zoe Lofgren, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	5
Prepared statement	6
Hon. Robert J. Wittman, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia, oral statement	7
Prepared statement	9
Hon. Marcy Kaptur, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio, oral statement	11
Prepared statement	15
Hon. John B. Larson, a Representative in Congress from the State of Connecticut, oral statement	17
Prepared statement	19
Hon. Earl Blumenauer, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, oral statement	20
Prepared statement	21
Hon. Derek Kilmer, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington, oral statement	22
Prepared statement	26
Hon. Bill Pascrell, Jr., a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey, oral statement	27
Prepared statement	29
Hon. Larry Bucshon, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana, oral statement	30
Prepared statement	31
Hon. Scott H. Peters, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	34
Prepared statement	36
Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia, oral statement	38
Prepared statement	39
Hon. Jim Costa, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	40
Prepared statement	42
Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro, a Representative in Congress from the State of Connecticut, oral statement	43
Prepared statement	45
Hon. Jodey C. Arrington, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement	46
Prepared statement	47
Hon. Kurt Schrader, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, oral statement	48

	Page
Hon. Kurt Schrader, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, oral statement—Continued	
Prepared statement	49
Hon. Katie Porter, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	50
Prepared statement	51
Hon. Dean Phillips, a Representative in Congress from the State of Min- nesota, oral statement	53
Prepared statement	54
Hon. Cheri Bustos, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois, oral statement	55
Prepared statement	56
Hon. Grace Meng, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	57
Prepared statement	59
Hon. Jim Hagedorn, a Representative in Congress from the State of Min- nesota, oral statement	59
Prepared statement	61
Hon. Michael Cloud, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement	63
Prepared statement	64
Hon. Josh Gottheimer, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey, oral statement	65
Prepared statement	67
Hon. Fred Keller, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, oral statement	68
Prepared statement	69
Hon. Lizzie Fletcher, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement	70
Prepared statement	72
Hon. Mike Quigley, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois, oral statement	73
Prepared statement	75
Hon. Virginia Foxx, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina, oral statement	76
Prepared statement	77
Hon. Young Kim, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	78
Prepared statement	79
Hon. Karen Bass, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	80
Prepared statement	81
Hon. Alma S. Adams, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina, oral statement	83
Prepared statement	84
Hon. Brad Sherman, a Representative in Congress from the State of Cali- fornia, oral statement	85
Prepared statement	86
Hon. Kim Schrier, a Representative in Congress from the State of Wash- ington, oral statement	87
Prepared statement	88
Hon. Chris Jacobs, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	91
Prepared statement	94
Hon. Tracey Mann, a Representative in Congress from the State of Kansas, oral statement	95
Prepared statement	96
Hon. Brian Higgins, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	97
Prepared statement	98
Hon. Elaine G. Luria, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia, oral statement	99
Prepared statement	100
Hon. Ed Case, a Representative in Congress from the State of Hawaii, oral statement	102
Prepared statement	103
Hon. Veronica Escobar, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement	105

	Page
Hon. Veronica Escobar, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement—Continued	
Prepared statement	106
Hon. Adriano Espaillat, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	107
Prepared statement	109
Hon. David N. Cicilline, a Representative in Congress from the State of Rhode Island, oral statement	110
Prepared statement	112
Hon. Mikie Sherrill, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey, oral statement	113
Prepared statement	115
Hon. Nanette Diaz Barragán, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	116
Prepared statement	117
Hon. Mondaire Jones, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	118
Prepared statement	120
Hon. Teresa Leger Fernandez, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Mexico, oral statement	121
Prepared statement	123
Hon. Al Green, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas, oral statement	124
Prepared statement	126
Hon. Jamaal Bowman, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	131
Prepared statement	133
Hon. Lauren Underwood, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois, oral statement	134
Prepared statement	135
Hon. Mike Levin, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	136
Prepared statement	138
Hon. Pramila Jayapal, a Representative in Congress from the State of Wash- ington, oral statement	139
Prepared statement	140
Hon. Angie Craig, a Representative in Congress from the State of Minnesota, oral statement	141
Prepared statement	143
Hon. Joe Neguse, a Representative in Congress from the State of Colorado, oral statement	144
Prepared statement	146
Hon. Paul Tonko, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York, oral statement	148
Prepared statement	149
Hon. Haley M. Stevens, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, oral statement	150
Prepared statement	154
Hon. Linda T. Sánchez, a Representative in Congress from the State of California, oral statement	155
Prepared statement	156
Hon. Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr., a Representative in Congress from the State of Montana, oral statement	157
Prepared statement	158
Hon. Mary Gay Scanlon, a Representative in Congress from the Common- wealth of Pennsylvania, oral statement	158
Prepared statement	160
Hon. Tom O'Halleran, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ari- zona, oral statement	161
Prepared statement	162
Hon. Andy Levin, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, oral statement	163
Prepared statement	164
Hon. Brenda L. Lawrence, a Representative in Congress from the State of Michigan, oral statement	165
Prepared statement	166
Hon. Lori Trahan, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, oral statement	167

	Page
Hon. Lori Trahan, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, oral statement—Continued	
Prepared statement	169
Hon. Tim Ryan, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio, oral statement	170
Prepared statement	172
Hon. Stacey E. Plaskett, a Delegate in Congress from the Virgin Islands, oral statement	173
Prepared statement	175
Hon. Bradley Scott Schneider, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois, oral statement	177
Prepared statement	178
Hon. Frank J. Mrvan, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana, oral statement	179
Prepared statement	181
Hon. Gwen Moore, a Representative in Congress from the State of Wisconsin, oral statement	182
Prepared statement	184

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Chart, U.S. Median Household Income per Congressional District, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Marcy Kaptur	13
Build Back Better Act—Fact Sheet, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Derek Kilmer	24
Letter of January 7, 2021, from the Allied Building Metal Industries et al., Submitted for the Record by Hon. Chris Jacobs	92
Aerial View and Map of the Beck Road Project, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Haley M. Stevens	152
Letter of April 14, 2021, from the Congressional Steel Caucus, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Frank J. Mrvan	180
Letter of April 14, 2021, from the Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference et al., Submitted for the Record by Hon. Troy Balderson	187
Prepared statements from the following Members of Congress:	
Hon. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., a Representative in Congress from the State of Georgia	189
Hon. Ted Budd, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina	190
Hon. Tony Cardenas, a Representative in Congress from the State of California	191
Hon. Matt Cartwright, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	191
Hon. Gerald E. Connolly, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia	192
Hon. Charlie Crist, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida	193
Hon. Danny K. Davis, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois	196
Hon. Sylvia R. Garcia, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas	197
Hon. H. Morgan Griffith, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia	197
Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva, a Representative in Congress from the State of Arizona	198
Hon. Jahana Hayes, a Representative in Congress from the State of Connecticut	200
Hon. Kevin Hern, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oklahoma	201
Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney, a Representative in Congress from the State of New York	207
Hon. Carol D. Miller, a Representative in Congress from the State of West Virginia	208
Hon. Jimmy Panetta, a Representative in Congress from the State of California	208
Hon. Harold Rogers, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Kentucky	209
Hon. Michael F.Q. San Nicolas, a Delegate in Congress from Guam	212
Hon. Jackie Speier, a Representative in Congress from the State of California	213

	Page
Prepared statements from the following Members of Congress—Continued	
Hon. Filemon Vela, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas	214



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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Sam Graves
Ranking Member

Paul J. Sans, Republican Staff Director

APRIL 9, 2021

SUMMARY OF SUBJECT MATTER

TO: Members, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
FROM: Staff, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
RE: Full Committee Hearing on “Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Members’ Day”

PURPOSE

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I Committee) will meet on Wednesday, April 14, 2021, at 11:00 a.m. EDT in 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Zoom to receive testimony related to “Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Members’ Day.” Pursuant to Section 3(a) of H. Res. 8, the purpose of this hearing is to provide Members of Congress not on the T&I Committee an opportunity to testify before the T&I Committee on the Member’s policy priorities within the Committee’s jurisdiction.

BACKGROUND

T&I COMMITTEE JURISDICTION

The T&I Committee has broad jurisdiction over all modes of transportation and numerous types of infrastructure programs and funding, which is overseen as delineated below by six subcommittees.

Subcommittee on Aviation:

The Subcommittee on Aviation has jurisdiction over all matters relating to civil aviation, including airport infrastructure, the air traffic control system, aviation safety, aviation noise, economic regulation of airlines, international aviation relations of the United States, war risk insurance, labor-management relations involving airlines and their employees; and the operation and administration of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation:

The Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation has jurisdiction over all matters relating to the Coast Guard, including merchant vessel, fishing vessel, and recreational vessel safety; vessel navigation and related laws; rules and international arrangements to prevent collisions at sea; and oil spill laws and associated financial responsibility requirements.

The Subcommittee also has jurisdiction over matters relating to the Maritime Administration, including ports, passenger vessels, international maritime activities, and intermodal transportation, except those matters related to national security. Finally, measures relating to the Federal Maritime Commission, including matters in-

volving water carriers in domestic and international trade, fall within the Subcommittee's jurisdiction.

Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management:

The Subcommittee on Economic Development, Public Buildings, and Emergency Management is responsible for economic development for economically distressed urban and rural areas, including programs administered by the Economic Development Administration, the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Delta Regional Authority, and the Denali Commission; economic adjustment, including assistance to communities needing relief due to natural disasters and military base closures; and general infrastructure issues.

Additionally, it has jurisdiction over the purchase, construction, repair, alteration, operation, and maintenance of federally owned or leased buildings and United States courthouses controlled by the General Services Administration; matters relating to the Capitol buildings and the Senate and House office buildings; and construction, maintenance, and care of the buildings and grounds of the Botanic Gardens, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institution, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Lastly, the Subcommittee covers Federal management of emergencies and natural disasters, including disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Subcommittee on Highways and Transit:

The Subcommittee on Highways and Transit is responsible for the development of federal surface transportation policy and the authorization of programs for the construction and improvement of highway and transit facilities, highway and transit safety, commercial motor vehicle and driver safety, and research and innovation programs. Related to these responsibilities, the Subcommittee has jurisdiction over the following modal administrations and offices within the U.S. Department of Transportation: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA); Federal Transit Administration (FTA); Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA); National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) (partial); Office of the Assistant Secretary for Research and Technology; National Surface Transportation and Innovative Finance Bureau; and Office of the Secretary of Transportation (OST).

Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials:

The Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials exercises jurisdiction over the programs and activities of two U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) modal administrations: the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee includes all federal laws and programs regulating railroad transportation, including railroad safety, rail infrastructure programs, economic regulation, railroad labor laws, and the non-revenue aspects of the federal railroad retirement and railroad unemployment systems. The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee also includes all federal laws and programs regulating the safety of gas and liquid pipelines and the safety of transporting material and freight that has been classified as hazardous, regardless of the mode of transportation.

Agencies and other establishments outside the DOT whose rail-related activities fall within the Subcommittee jurisdiction include: Surface Transportation Board (STB); Amtrak; Amtrak Inspector General (IG); Northeast Corridor (NEC) Commission; Railroad Retirement Board (RRB); Railroad Retirement Board Inspector General (RRB IG); National Railroad Retirement Investment Trust; and National Mediation Board (NMB).

Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment:

The jurisdiction of the Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment consists generally of matters relating to water resources development, conservation and management, water pollution control and water infrastructure, and hazardous waste cleanup.

Issues under the Subcommittee include: water resources programs (projects and regulations)—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps); Clean Water Act, water infrastructure and watershed protection programs—Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); Clean Water Act, regulatory authorities—EPA and Corps; Superfund and Brownfields revitalization—EPA; ocean dumping—EPA and Corps; oil pollution—EPA and Coast Guard; Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA); Great Lakes-Saint Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation—DOT; National Resources Conservation Service's Small Watershed Program—U.S. Department of Agriculture; deepwater ports—EPA, Coast Guard, Corps; invasive/aquatic nuisance species/harmful algal

blooms—EPA, Coast Guard, Corps, and other agencies; coastal pollution and coastal zone management—EPA and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); natural resource damages—NOAA, Department of the Interior (DOI), and other agencies; groundwater protection—primarily EPA and Corps; water resources policy—multiple agencies; toxic substances and public health—Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR); and boundary water issues between the United States and Mexico—the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) at the U.S. Department of State.

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE MEMBERS' DAY HEARING

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 14, 2021

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE,
WASHINGTON, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to call, at 11:06 a.m. in room 2167 Rayburn House Office Building and via Zoom, Hon. Peter A. DeFazio (Chairman of the committee) presiding.

Mr. DEFAZIO. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will come to order.

I ask unanimous consent the chair be authorized to declare a recess at any time during today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

As a reminder, it is the responsibility of each Member seeking recognition to unmute their microphone prior to speaking, and to keep their microphone muted when not speaking to avoid inadvertent background noise. If I hear any inadvertent background noise, I will yell at you.

If a Member is experiencing any technical issues, please inform committee staff as soon as possible so you can have assistance.

And to put a document in the record, please have your staff email documents to DocumentsT&I@mail.house.gov.

Welcome to our Members' Day hearing, which is an opportunity for our House colleagues who do not serve on this committee, the largest committee in Congress—but there are still a few of you—to testify on either individual project priorities or policy priorities that they would like to see in the infrastructure package.

We must pass a surface transportation bill before October 1st of this year. We must. It has been far too long that we've kicked the can down the road. Even with the last bill, the FAST Act and predecessors, we need a much more robust program to deal with our deficient, collapsing infrastructure.

This couldn't be happening at a more critical time. I think it is really finally time to go big and bold, and to move beyond the Eisenhower era of infrastructure. Essentially, we are working off Eisenhower 7.0; it is time to move to a 21st-century approach, an approach that will create millions of good-paying jobs; restore global competitiveness; unleash our economic potential; make people's lives better; communities safer, more equitable, affordable, livable; and move—critically, move our country toward a clean energy future, in concert with the private sector, which is already moving that way, and cut carbon pollution from transportation, which is

the single largest contributor to carbon pollution created by the United States of America.

Many of these goals have been before us and have been an aspiration of many of us on this committee for years. And last year it was reflected in the very ambitious Moving Forward Act that we passed in the House, with our section being the INVEST Act, the largest single section of that bill.

So after fits and starts in Congress in recent administrations—President Obama killed a major surface bill 12 years ago, President Trump held seven fake infrastructure weeks. It became a bad joke in DC, something like “Groundhog Day,” I guess. And even though we passed an ambitious bill in the House, the Senate could do nothing but status quo, and it was even hard to get them to status quo. That can’t continue.

It is not just that we need to modernize what we have, and build for the future, we also have to consider that, despite recent improvements in the economy, we are still down more than 8 million jobs in the economy. And that is using the defective current measures, which doesn’t include discouraged workers and others who would like to have good-paying jobs working on rebuilding the Nation’s infrastructure, given the proper training. So there is, obviously, going to be a worker training component to this, too.

I support the President’s American Jobs Plan. Thus far it is a 25-page outline. We have been in constant communication with the White House and Department of Transportation, receiving suggestions from them on further steps. And now it will be up to us to put the details in place. A large portion of the plan that will benefit communities of all sizes, all sizes, from major metropolitan areas, mid-sized cities, and rural areas who have been often left behind in our past attempts at infrastructure, and the jobs components that could follow from this.

I represent a district in southwest Oregon where the benefits have not flowed to a very large portion of my district, and they have tremendous infrastructure needs there. Small cities and rural areas have transit needs with communities aging in place. All those things are addressed in this bill.

Social equity is addressed in this bill. The President has proposed a new program to deal with the fact that there was intentional design to divide communities of color because there was less resistance to, or less capability of resisting, freeways which divided communities through cities in those communities. Now that infrastructure is aging out. He pointed out one in his address, which is in New Orleans. It is a skyway. It is going to fall down soon. We got to replace it. It could be replaced in a way that rejoins that community, restores social equity and vibrancy to that community, and continues to, in better ways, facilitate the same or better throughput of traffic.

So we have some very, very unique opportunities for me. We don’t always agree on this committee, but we share a lot of goals, regardless of which side of the aisle you are on. We have a proven track record of achieving results, and now we are inviting all of our House colleagues to join as we demonstrate to the American people that their Government is still capable of working together, taking responsible action to complete critical projects, create good-paying

jobs, bolster U.S. industry, save lives, preserve affordable access to transportation and water infrastructure, protect our natural resources, make smart investments—21st-century investments—to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

And thanks to all the Members today who are going to come before the committee.

[Mr. DeFazio's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Peter A. DeFazio, a Representative in Congress from the State of Oregon, and Chair, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Welcome to our Members' Day Hearing, which is an opportunity for our House colleagues to appear before the Committee to testify about their infrastructure priorities. As of this morning more than 70 members, both Democrat and Republican, have signed up to speak, a pretty good indication of the appetite for action.

Of course, this hearing could not be happening at a more critical time. After decades of underinvestment and inattention to the state of our nation's roads, bridges, transit, rail, wastewater and so much more, the stars have aligned to go big and bold on infrastructure and finally bring our systems out of the Eisenhower era. This is a moment more than 70 years in the making, and if done right, it's an incredible opportunity to:

- Create millions of good-paying jobs and rebuild the middle class;
- Restore our global competitiveness and unleash our economic potential;
- Make people's lives better and our communities safer and more equitable, affordable, and livable;
- And critically, move our country toward a clean energy future in concert with the private sector—which is already moving that way—and cut carbon pollution from the transportation sector, which is the number one source of emissions in the United States.

These goals are something my Committee colleagues and I have worked on a lot over the years—and it culminated in our very ambitious bill, the Moving Forward Act, that we passed in the House last year. Unfortunately, that effort hit a brick wall in the Republican-led, Do-Nothing Senate.

So, after fits and starts in Congress and in recent administrations—including the seven fake Infrastructure Weeks under the previous White House—I'm incredibly encouraged by the fact that the current administration has made rebuilding our infrastructure a top priority.

It's not just that we need to modernize what we have and build for the future: We must also consider that despite recent improvements in the economy, the fact is, we're still down more than 8 million jobs compared to pre-pandemic levels. And even well before the pandemic, this country has suffered from a lack of good-paying, middle class jobs. I strongly believe that rebuilding and re-imagining our infrastructure is hands down the best tool we have to usher in American manufacturing's second act.

That's why I support the president's American Jobs Plan, which gives Congress the broad strokes of where the administration wants to go.

It's now up to this Committee to put the details into place on a large portion of that plan in a way that benefits communities of all sizes, from major metropolitan areas, to mid-sized cities, to rural communities, like much of the district I represent in Southwest Oregon. Americans across this country absolutely want Congress to act. That much is clear.

That effort moves forward with today's hearing, which will help inform our must-pass surface transportation reauthorization bill, which is the heart of any infrastructure plan and something I intend to introduce and move through this Committee in a matter of weeks.

I appreciate the Committee's Ranking Member Sam Graves for our ongoing dialogue and for working with me on including Member Designated Projects in our surface bill. Making sure members can directly advocate for their districts—as we'll hear a lot of today—is key. Just like I know my district better than someone at a federal agency and am held accountable by my constituents, so do the members we'll hear from today.

I know that Members of our Committee share a lot of goals, regardless of which side of the aisle you're on, and we have a proven track record of achieving results.

Now we invite all of our House colleagues to join as we demonstrate to the American people that their government is still capable of working together and taking responsible action to complete critical projects, create good paying jobs, bolster U.S. industries, save lives, preserve affordable access to transportation and water infrastructure, protect our natural resources, and make smart investments to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Thank you to all Members who have made time to come before the Committee today. I look forward to your testimony.

Mr. DEFAZIO. With that, I recognize the ranking member, Sam Graves.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate the opportunity, I appreciate the hearing, as well, and I look forward to hearing from all of our Members about their policy priorities ahead of our upcoming surface transportation markup that is going to happen in May.

We ultimately want to work together on a bipartisan bill, but that does require commitment from both sides.

But I do appreciate my colleagues taking the time to be with us today. I think we have a lot that are going to testify, and so I am not going to take up any more time. But I do appreciate them taking the time.

[Mr. Graves of Missouri's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Sam Graves, a Representative in Congress from the State of Missouri, and Ranking Member, Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Thank you, Chair DeFazio.

I look forward to hearing from Members about their policy priorities ahead of our upcoming surface transportation markup in May.

We ultimately want to work together on a bipartisan bill, but that requires a commitment from all sides.

I appreciate my colleagues taking time to visit with us today and thank you again for being here.

With that, I yield back.

Mr. GRAVES OF MISSOURI. With that, I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. Well, I thank the gentleman for his brevity. He has outshone me there. But in any case, I look forward to working with him, and we look forward to hearing from our colleagues.

So Members appearing before the committee today will have 5 minutes to give their oral testimony.

Without objection, their written statements will be included in the record.

Given the number of Members appearing before the committee today, and out of consideration for our colleagues' time, I ask unanimous consent that members of the committee be given 2 minutes each to question our Member witnesses following their statements.

Without objection, so ordered.

As we go through the hearing, I will call out the order of the new witnesses, so Members can be prepared to testify when recognized.

The first witnesses will be Representatives Lofgren, Wittman, Kaptur, Larson—s-o-n—and Blumenauer.

With that, Representative Lofgren, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ZOE LOFGREN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. LOFGREN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Graves, for this opportunity to participate. My statement today focuses on reconciling the needs of growing residential communities and cities with increased rail activity.

Congress has long recognized the benefits of rail as a means of mass transit and efficient shipping. However, as cities become more densely populated, and rail traffic increases, I urge the committee to examine the need for reforms in this area to ensure that railroad companies do not pose an extreme nuisance or, even worse yet, a danger to the communities they pass through.

The historic San José neighborhoods of Japantown and Hensley in my district are located along the Union Pacific Railroad Warm Springs Corridor. In 2018, Union Pacific told the community that they were going to increase services throughout the day and add train service at night. And since February 1st of 2019, Union Pacific has been running trains in the area at nighttime, including but not limited to 5:30 p.m., 7 p.m., 10 p.m., 11:30 p.m., 12:30 a.m., 2 a.m., and 4 a.m.

And, as required by the FRA, conductors use their horns in a standardized manner. When approaching street crossings, they blast four horn blasts that are between 96 and 110 decibels. This is the equivalent of the sound of a jet taking off, or a rock concert. The train horn severely disrupts evening activities. They wake up residents on a nightly basis.

There are approximately 11,415 residents living in the impacted area. And with additional housing that was approved prior to the expansion of rail service, there will be thousands more.

In 2020 the pandemic further compounded the problem as constituents complied with stay-at-home orders. In addition to lowering productivity, the effects of noise pollution, sleep deprivation, and stress are known to have long-term health consequences.

Local and State-elected officials, community members, and even my office have made attempts to discuss the schedule change and train horn noise issue with UP. In fact, the mayor of San José and I spoke to the chairman of Union Pacific to no avail.

Due to FRA requirements to use the train horn in residential areas, and the lack of legal obligations on railroad companies to make schedule modifications, even in circumstances such as the one described, Union Pacific has continued to carry out its increased service schedule.

Train horns are an important element in preventing injuries and fatalities. But, as evidenced by the thousands of calls and letters I have received from my constituents in the last 3 years, they can also be detrimental to the community.

I urge the committee to examine new and emerging technologies and methods that could be used to mitigate the negative impact of horns on communities near railroad tracks and alternatives to traditional horns.

And I also urge you to look at the increase in train activities in growing communities like the ones in my district, which pose a significant safety risk.

San José's Japantown is one of the last three surviving Japantowns in the United States, and a popular destination for both locals and the region. It is known for its rich culture and unique small businesses. There are several high-density, mixed-use developments around the rail crossings in this area, which cause an influx of pedestrian and vehicular activities.

The city of San José and local residents have shared concern about the lack of sufficient rail crossing safety measures as train service in the area has increased. One of the crossings is lacking complete railroad crossing vehicle gates, and all of the crossings are lacking pedestrian treatments, which is why I will be seeking Member-designated project request assistance from the committee to allow the city to build out the superior safety measures that will reduce the potential for train incidents with vehicles and pedestrians.

I thank the committee for allowing me to speak, and also I know that it is a long day for committee members to listen to your colleagues. But it is appreciated that you would take this time to listen to us, who are not on the committee, but have issues of concern to you.

And with that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[Ms. Lofgren's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Zoe Lofgren, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to participate in today's hearing.

My statement today focuses on reconciling the needs of growing residential communities and cities with increased rail activity. Congress has long recognized the benefits of rail as a means of mass transit and efficient shipping. However, as cities become more densely populated and rail traffic increases, I urge the Committee to examine the need for reforms in this area to ensure that railroad companies do not pose an extreme nuisance, or worse yet danger, to the communities they pass through.

The historic San José neighborhoods of Japantown and Hensley in my district are located along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Warm Springs Corridor. In 2018, UPRR informed the community of plans to increase service throughout the day and to add train service at night.

Since February 1, 2019, UPRR has been running trains in the area at the night-time hours including but not limited to 5:30 pm, 7:00 pm, 10:00 pm, 11:30 pm, 12:30 am, 2:00 am, and 4:00 am. As required by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) train conductors use their horns in a standardized manner when approaching street crossings, emitting four horn blasts that are between 96 and 110 decibels. This is equivalent to the sound of a jet taking off or a rock concert. The train horns severely disrupt evening activities and wake up area residents on a nightly basis. There are approximately 11,415 residents living in this impacted area. In 2020, the pandemic further compounded the problem, as my constituents complied with the stay-at-home order. In addition to lowering productivity, the effects of noise pollution, sleep deprivation, and stress are known to have long-term health consequences.

Local and state elected officials, community members, and even my office have made attempts to discuss the schedule change and train horn noise issue with UPRR. But, due to FRA requirements to use the train horn in residential areas and the lack of legal obligations on railroad companies to make schedule modifications even in circumstances such as the ones described, UPRR has continued to carry out its increased service schedule.

Train horns serve an important purpose in preventing tragic rail injuries and fatalities. But, as evidenced by the thousands of calls and letters I have received from my constituents about them in the last three years, they can also be detrimental to communities. I encourage the Committee to examine new and emerging tech-

nologies and methods that can be used to mitigate the negative impact of horns on communities near railroad tracks and alternatives to traditional train horns.

The increase in train activity in growing communities like the ones in my district also poses a significant safety risk. San José's Japantown is one of the last three surviving Japantowns in the United States and a popular destination for both locals and the region known for its rich culture and unique small businesses. There are several high-density mixed-use developments around the rail crossings in this area that are anticipated to complete construction this year. There will also be over 19,000 square feet of retail and a public park, causing an influx of pedestrian and vehicular activity in this area.

The City of San José and local residents have shared concerns about the lack of sufficient rail crossing safety measures as train service in the area has increased. One of the crossings is lacking complete railroad crossing vehicle gates. All the crossings are lacking pedestrian treatments. This is why I will be seeking Member Designated Project Request funding from the Committee to allow the City to build out the superior safety measures that will reduce the potential for train incidents with vehicles or pedestrians.

Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady. Do Members, any Members, have questions for Representative Lofgren?

Seeing none, thank you very much for your testimony, I appreciate it.

We now move on to Representative Wittman.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ROBERT J. WITTMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. WITTMAN. Well, thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves.

And I represent the First Congressional District of Virginia, which is home to some of the most unique traffic challenges in the country. The First Congressional District spans the I-95 corridor in northern Virginia, including the worst traffic hotspot in the Nation, all the way down to the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, which includes the most neglected rural roads and bridges in Virginia.

Furthermore, the National Capital region is also home to one of the most strained public transportation networks in the country, which includes the Virginia Railway Express, Metro, Amtrak, and Ronald Reagan International and Dulles International Airports.

Moreover, the Port of Virginia, which services all 48 contiguous States, also faces an urgent need for expansion.

Addressing congestion along the I-95 corridor is essential. I believe the Federal Government can address those issues by providing adequate resources in order to leverage the State's investments. Congress must prioritize public-private partnerships and innovative, modern-day technologies.

An important component of reducing traffic congestion in northern Virginia is commuter rail. Long Bridge, which spans the Potomac River between Virginia and DC, is a critical gateway between Southeast and Northeast rail networks. Constituents in my district rely on the services of the VRE and Amtrak to commute throughout DC and northern Virginia. Owned and operated by CSX, the existing Long Bridge is the only railroad bridge connecting Virginia to DC and is the most significant passenger and freight rail choke point along the entire east coast.

Under normal circumstances, the bridge functions at 98 percent capacity during peak periods, preventing DC, Virginia, and Maryland from increasing passenger and commuter rail service for their communities.

Last month, Virginia and CSX finalized a landmark agreement to expand reliability and service on Virginia's rail lines, creating a pathway to separate passenger and freight operations along the Richmond to DC corridor. This \$3.7 billion investment included building a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River, with dedicated tracks for passenger and commuter rail.

As a requirement for the Long Bridge project to proceed, Virginia needed to acquire land from the National Park Service. Fortunately, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 included my bill, the Long Bridge Act of 2020, which allows the necessary transfer of National Park Service lands for the Long Bridge project.

The Port of Virginia is one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard, and it urgently needs to be deepened, widened, and expanded so its channels can accommodate today's larger ships. The Port of Virginia is one of the Commonwealth's most powerful economic engines. On an annual basis, the port is responsible for more than 400,000 jobs and \$92 billion in spending across our Commonwealth.

Furthermore, the Port of Virginia generates more than 7½ percent of our gross State product. But the port's true reach extends throughout the mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest and Ohio Valley.

The deepening and widening of Norfolk Harbor will ensure the continued safe and timely passage of larger commercial and military vessels through Norfolk Harbor. Public and private non-Federal interests have invested billions of dollars on landside infrastructure and are prepared to provide their cost share to complete this crucial navigation project in a timely manner. In order to remain on schedule, the Norfolk Harbor and Channel Project requires a "new start" designation, and robust Federal investment to fully fund the Inner Harbor contract and match the non-Federal cost share.

Federal investment in this project will allow the port to remain a prominent economic hub for the Nation, and a key player in domestic and international trade by generating more than \$78 million in annual national economic development benefits.

The Interstate 64 corridor is the lifeline connecting the economic and military hub of Hampton Roads to the rest of the Commonwealth and to the world. I-64 is a significant transportation corridor, allowing residents to commute daily, and providing easy access to tourism attractions throughout the region. The I-64 Peninsula Widening Project in the Hampton Roads area is vital to increase vehicle capacity, resulting in immediate congestion relief along one of the most heavily traveled highways in Virginia. Widening I-64 is essential for increased economic development in the Hampton Roads region, and directly supports the transportation of freight lines from the Port of Virginia.

It is essential also for military readiness by providing access to, from, and between military facilities, and is an essential emergency evacuation route during hurricane events affecting southeast Virginia and northeast North Carolina.

As for our need for infrastructure increases, so too do the demands for a skilled and capable workforce. Placing more emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and math, and career and technical education is needed to help better prepare our students to meet the demands of our workforce.

Addressing America's transportation infrastructure is a shared responsibility between Federal, State, and local governments.

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today, and I look forward to working with you and the rest of the committee to improve America's infrastructure.

[Mr. Wittman's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert J. Wittman, a Representative in
Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

I represent the First District of Virginia, which is home to some of the most unique transportation challenges in the country. The First District spans the I-95 Corridor in Northern Virginia, including the worst traffic hotspot in the nation, all the way down to the Northern Neck and Middle Peninsula, which includes the most neglected rural roads and bridges in Virginia.

Furthermore, the National Capital Region is also home to one of the most strained public transit networks in the country, which includes the Virginia Railway Express (VRE), METRO, Amtrak, Ronald Reagan International (DCA) and Dulles International (IAD) Airports. Moreover, the Port of Virginia, which services all 48 contiguous states, faces an urgent need for expansion.

Addressing congestion along the I-95 corridor is essential. I believe the federal government can address those issues by providing adequate resources in order to leverage the state's investments. Congress must prioritize public-private partnerships and innovative modern-day technologies.

An important component to reducing traffic congestion in Northern Virginia is commuter rail. Long Bridge, which spans the Potomac River between Virginia and DC, is a critical gateway between southeast and northeast rail networks. Constituents in my district rely on services of the VRE and Amtrak to commute throughout DC and Northern Virginia. Owned and operated by CSX, the existing Long Bridge is the only railroad bridge connecting Virginia to DC and is the most significant passenger and freight rail choke point along the entire east coast. Under normal circumstances, the bridge functions at 98% capacity during peak periods, preventing DC, Virginia, and Maryland from increasing passenger and commuter rail service for their communities. Just last month, Virginia and CSX finalized a landmark agreement to expand reliability and service on Virginia's rail lines, creating a pathway to separate passenger and freight operations along the Richmond to DC corridor. This \$3.7 billion investment included building a new Virginia-owned Long Bridge across the Potomac River, with dedicated tracks for passenger and commuter rail. As a requirement for the Long Bridge Project to proceed, Virginia needed to acquire land from the National Park Service. Fortunately, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 included my bill The Long Bridge Act of 2020, which allows the necessary transfer of National Park Service lands for the Long Bridge Project.

The Port of Virginia, one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard, urgently needs to deepen, widen, and expand its channels. The Port of Virginia is one of the Commonwealth's most powerful economic engines. On an annual basis, the Port is responsible for more than 400,000 jobs and \$92 billion in spending across our Commonwealth. Furthermore, the Port of Virginia generates more than seven and a half percent of our Gross State Product, but the Port's true reach extends throughout the Mid-Atlantic and into the Midwest and Ohio Valley. The deepening and widening of Norfolk Harbor will ensure the continued safe and timely passage of larger commercial and military vessels through Norfolk Harbor. Public and private non-federal interests have invested billions of dollars on landside infrastructure and are prepared to provide their cost share to complete this crucial navigation project in a timely manner. In order to remain on schedule, the Norfolk Harbor and Channel Project requires a New Start Designation and robust federal investment to fully fund the Inner Harbor contract and match the non-federal cost share. Federal

investment in this project will allow the Port to remain a prominent economic hub for the nation and a key player in domestic and international trade by generating more than \$78 million in annual national economic development benefits.

Interstate 64 (I-64) corridor is the lifeline connecting the economic and military hub of Hampton Roads to the rest of the Commonwealth and the world. I-64 is a significant transportation corridor allowing residents to commute daily and providing easy access to tourist attractions throughout the region. The I-64 Peninsula Widening Project in the Hampton Roads area is vital to increase vehicle capacity, resulting in immediate congestion relief along one of the most heavily traveled highways in Virginia. Widening I-64 is essential for increased economic development in the Hampton Roads Region and directly supports the transportation of freight from the Port of Virginia. It is essential for military readiness by providing access to, from, and between military facilities, and is an essential emergency evacuation route during hurricane events affecting southeast Virginia.

As our need for infrastructure increases, so too do the demands for a skilled and capable workforce. Placing more emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) and Career and Technical Education (CTE) is needed to help better prepare our students to meet the demands of our workforce.

Lower population density in rural areas often leads to lower ridership for fixed transit routes and a smaller tax base to fund maintenance and repair of transportation systems. The lack of investment in infrastructure in rural communities coupled with increasing use of rural roads over time has also affected transportation safety. The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) estimates that 40 percent of roads in rural areas are "inadequate for current use travel," while nearly 50 percent of bridges over 20 feet long are currently considered "structurally deficient."

Long distances are a key barrier for many people living in rural areas. Average trips for medical services are about nine miles longer in rural regions. Those with a personal vehicle can be adversely affected by rising gas prices, making longer trips more expensive. Access to safe and reliable transportation impacts the health and well-being of rural populations. Reliable transportation is necessary for accessing healthcare services in rural communities, particularly in communities where walking or cycling may not be feasible alternatives to reach a healthcare provider. Barriers to transportation can result in missed healthcare appointments, delays in receiving healthcare interventions, and missed or delayed use of needed medications. The challenge of accessing medical care in rural America hinders the elderly, low-income, disabled, and special needs individuals, particularly not having enough affordable options for disability accessible non-emergency vehicles. Any additional funding and a greater emphasis for connecting rural Americans to health centers to allow for greater flexibility of appointment schedule would be appreciated.

Moreover, the overall condition of our secondary roads is deteriorating. For example, some roads in rural parts of Virginia's First Congressional District are not wide enough for two vehicles to pass simultaneously. The narrowness causes one vehicle to leave the pavement and continue onto gravel or natural surfaces that cause damage to the physical condition of the vehicle. In many places, the crown in the road is so bad that the only way a school bus can travel through is to wait until there are no oncoming traffic and drive down the middle of the narrow road straddling the crown in the road. Additionally, the potholes, cracks, and road depressions cause major vehicle damage. The poor condition of our secondary roads impacts our region's agritourism. During peak seasons, agritourism farms can have hundreds of children a week visit for field trips from surrounding school districts. Another set of challenges that rural Virginia localities face is project prioritization and technical assistance for application processes.

I want to draw attention to the Robert O. Norris Bridge, maintained by the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Norris Bridge spans the Rappahannock River between Lancaster County and Middlesex County, Virginia. The Norris Bridge is now in its seventh decade of operation. At its completion, the bridge serviced an average of 1,000 vehicles per day, now according to surveys, the bridge services 8,208 vehicles on an average weekday. Overtime, faced with the wear and tear of the elements along with the increase in traffic, the replacement of the Norris Bridge has not only become a necessity for the transportation of commerce within the region, but also the safety of the motorists who travel it. The existing Norris Bridge crosses the widest and deepest part of the Rappahannock River in Virginia. Recreational boaters and commercial vessels within the area navigate the channel underneath the bridge daily. After hearing from my constituents, any reduction on vertical or horizontal clearances would significantly alter the state of boat traffic transitioning underneath the bridge.

Lastly, expanding access to high-speed internet is critical to our nation's growth and economic development. As Co-Chair of the House Rural Broadband Caucus I have made expanding broadband access in rural areas a top priority. Currently, burdensome regulations hinder shovel-ready projects from providing broadband access to unserved populations throughout the country. By streamlining our federal permitting processes, Congress can help better connect the more than 20 million Americans with little or no access to broadband, to the digital economy.

Addressing America's transportation infrastructure is a shared responsibility between federal, state, and local governments.

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today. I look forward to working with you and the rest of the committee to improve America's infrastructure.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. Any Members have questions?

I would just reflect we had a very compelling testimony by the Secretary of your DOT on the rail commuter project, and the cost-benefit analysis between that and widening the freeway—which would have ultimately been as congested—was extraordinary, and a good and new way to look at infrastructure. And I would refer your concerns about the harbor to the Water Resources Development Act, which we have begun work on, and reauthorize every 2 years.

With that, I thank the gentleman for his testimony. We now turn to Representative Kaptur.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MARCY KAPTUR, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Ms. KAPTUR. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, for this very fine opportunity. Thank you for your work, first of all.

I have seven proposals I would like to present to the committee but will summarize very quickly.

First of all, upgrading Amtrak's long-distance routes. I want to applaud your committee for including my floor amendments last year expressing concern for proposed cuts to long-distance Amtrak routes. And I support emergency funding, which Congress included, for long-distance routes.

But I am concerned that recent proposals floated by Amtrak to expand short- and medium-term distance service may ignore current long-distance routes in the system. And regionally, from the Great Lakes, I must express the view that Amtrak must first enhance the Cleveland to Chicago route, and then explore opportunities for short- or medium-distance service along these routes.

Number two, I would like to strengthen regional transportation planning and financing. Regional transportation planning organizations have been in existence now for about half a century. It is time to empower those organizations serving large metropolitan counties and regions by authorizing and testing a pilot program to allow them to bond public as well as public-private sector regional projects at some level by retaining a portion of proceeds from the gas tax or other transport-related fees to enhance their ability to carry forward regional projects in a more timely manner.

Third, I would like to improve U.S.-Canada multimodal investments. Improving multimodal planning cooperation along the U.S.-Canadian border presents binational opportunities. Canada is the largest U.S. trading partner, with Canada accepting annually near-

ly \$278 billion of U.S. exports. The Department of Transportation should more effectively utilize regional MPOs to undertake an enhanced binational, multimodal transportation corridor planning study, along with Canadian border counterparts.

Number four, I would like to ask the committee to consider enhanced interstate easements. A long, time-tested U.S. interstate such as I-80/90 in conjunction with relevant States that operate turnpikes, such as New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, to name four, I believe the Department of Transportation should study these transport corridors and their public easements for the potential to accommodate dual uses or quadruple uses vital to our Nation, such as modern grid, clean power, broadband, autonomous vehicles, light rail, and breakthrough technologies like Hyperloop, suspended overhead transport, and onsite solar and wind turbine power production.

Fifth, I would like to suggest that the committee consider assisting localities with electric vehicle transition in new maintenance garages with enhanced training for the mechanics that will have to do this work.

Let me address these major infrastructure challenges as we convert and use new vehicles, buses, and equipment in the massive public fleets of our country.

First, our Nation must help build clean, well-ventilated, public maintenance, transit, and service repair garages, especially in metropolitan areas, where thousands of vehicles are involved.

Let me draw your attention to these often neglected, poorly ventilated public service and public maintenance garages in some cities and transit systems across our country. Our Nation is asking mechanics in these locations to convert and service major fleets: fire engines, ambulances, refuse trucks, street sweepers, graders, snowplows, millions of police cars and buses, to name just a few.

As I testify today, I can guarantee mechanics across our country suffer from pulmonary conditions and cancers contracted from working in these unhealthy situations from a lingering diesel and carbon transport era. The skilled individuals who work on these new-age vehicles too often work in conditions not worthy of the 21st century.

And I can guarantee you that working on electric vehicles with new battery technologies, more computers, as well as the potential for fires is different than working on conventional engines. Special training for service personnel who do that difficult work must attend to conversion and use to avoid electrocution and many other fires that result from battery technology. So pressing concerns for the workplace is high on my priority list, and must proceed hand-in-hand with the clean energy age.

I am submitting for the record a chart that ranks every congressional district by median income of household. I would ask the committee to begin by prioritizing those communities that rank in the bottom third for better maintenance garages and for train mechanics.

[The information follows:]

**Chart, U.S. Median Household Income per Congressional District,
Submitted for the Record by Hon. Marcy Kaptur**

U.S. Median Household Income Per Congressional District

Rank	Branch	2019 Median Income	Representative %
1	GA-16	\$140,879	A. Wilson
2	GA-18	\$140,879	A. Wilson
3	GA-19	\$140,879	A. Wilson
4	GA-20	\$140,879	A. Wilson
5	GA-21	\$140,879	A. Wilson
6	GA-22	\$140,879	A. Wilson
7	GA-23	\$140,879	A. Wilson
8	GA-24	\$140,879	A. Wilson
9	GA-25	\$140,879	A. Wilson
10	GA-26	\$140,879	A. Wilson
11	GA-27	\$140,879	A. Wilson
12	GA-28	\$140,879	A. Wilson
13	GA-29	\$140,879	A. Wilson
14	GA-30	\$140,879	A. Wilson
15	GA-31	\$140,879	A. Wilson
16	GA-32	\$140,879	A. Wilson
17	GA-33	\$140,879	A. Wilson
18	GA-34	\$140,879	A. Wilson
19	GA-35	\$140,879	A. Wilson
20	GA-36	\$140,879	A. Wilson
21	GA-37	\$140,879	A. Wilson
22	GA-38	\$140,879	A. Wilson
23	GA-39	\$140,879	A. Wilson
24	GA-40	\$140,879	A. Wilson
25	GA-41	\$140,879	A. Wilson
26	GA-42	\$140,879	A. Wilson
27	GA-43	\$140,879	A. Wilson
28	GA-44	\$140,879	A. Wilson
29	GA-45	\$140,879	A. Wilson
30	GA-46	\$140,879	A. Wilson
31	GA-47	\$140,879	A. Wilson
32	GA-48	\$140,879	A. Wilson
33	GA-49	\$140,879	A. Wilson
34	GA-50	\$140,879	A. Wilson
35	GA-51	\$140,879	A. Wilson
36	GA-52	\$140,879	A. Wilson
37	GA-53	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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42	GA-58	\$140,879	A. Wilson
43	GA-59	\$140,879	A. Wilson
44	GA-60	\$140,879	A. Wilson
45	GA-61	\$140,879	A. Wilson
46	GA-62	\$140,879	A. Wilson
47	GA-63	\$140,879	A. Wilson
48	GA-64	\$140,879	A. Wilson
49	GA-65	\$140,879	A. Wilson
50	GA-66	\$140,879	A. Wilson
51	GA-67	\$140,879	A. Wilson
52	GA-68	\$140,879	A. Wilson
53	GA-69	\$140,879	A. Wilson
54	GA-70	\$140,879	A. Wilson
55	GA-71	\$140,879	A. Wilson
56	GA-72	\$140,879	A. Wilson
57	GA-73	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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68	GA-84	\$140,879	A. Wilson
69	GA-85	\$140,879	A. Wilson
70	GA-86	\$140,879	A. Wilson
71	GA-87	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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74	GA-90	\$140,879	A. Wilson
75	GA-91	\$140,879	A. Wilson
76	GA-92	\$140,879	A. Wilson
77	GA-93	\$140,879	A. Wilson
78	GA-94	\$140,879	A. Wilson
79	GA-95	\$140,879	A. Wilson
80	GA-96	\$140,879	A. Wilson
81	GA-97	\$140,879	A. Wilson
82	GA-98	\$140,879	A. Wilson
83	GA-99	\$140,879	A. Wilson
84	GA-100	\$140,879	A. Wilson
85	GA-101	\$140,879	A. Wilson
86	GA-102	\$140,879	A. Wilson
87	GA-103	\$140,879	A. Wilson
88	GA-104	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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91	GA-107	\$140,879	A. Wilson
92	GA-108	\$140,879	A. Wilson
93	GA-109	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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97	GA-113	\$140,879	A. Wilson
98	GA-114	\$140,879	A. Wilson
99	GA-115	\$140,879	A. Wilson
100	GA-116	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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102	GA-118	\$140,879	A. Wilson
103	GA-119	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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123	GA-139	\$140,879	A. Wilson
124	GA-140	\$140,879	A. Wilson
125	GA-141	\$140,879	A. Wilson
126	GA-142	\$140,879	A. Wilson
127	GA-143	\$140,879	A. Wilson
128	GA-144	\$140,879	A. Wilson
129	GA-145	\$140,879	A. Wilson
130	GA-146	\$140,879	A. Wilson
131	GA-147	\$140,879	A. Wilson
132	GA-148	\$140,879	A. Wilson
133	GA-149	\$140,879	A. Wilson
134	GA-150	\$140,879	A. Wilson
135	GA-151	\$140,879	A. Wilson
136	GA-152	\$140,879	A. Wilson
137	GA-153	\$140,879	A. Wilson
138	GA-154	\$140,879	A. Wilson
139	GA-155	\$140,879	A. Wilson
140	GA-156	\$140,879	A. Wilson
141	GA-157	\$140,879	A. Wilson
142	GA-158	\$140,879	A. Wilson
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303	GA-319	\$140,879	A. Wilson
304	GA-320	\$140,879	A. Wilson
305	GA-321	\$140,879	A. Wilson
306	GA-322	\$140,879	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2019 American Community Survey 1-year estimates in <https://www.census.gov/invoice/>. **Democrat**: <https://www.census.gov/invoice/>

2016	12/25	3/29/2018	1/10/2019	3/28/2019	3/28/2019	3/28/2019
2016	12/25	3/29/2018	1/10/2019	3/28/2019	3/28/2019	3/28/2019

Source: U.S. Census Bureau's 2019 American Community Survey 5-year estimates <https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2019/acs/5-year.html>

Ms. KAPTUR. Finally, I would like to propose creating attention to the Great Lakes region, and I look forward in the future to presenting the committee with two proposals, one to augment the authorities of the Great Lakes St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation and, more boldly, to create a Great Lakes Authority. The region's five Great Lakes are the source of 21 percent of the world's fresh surface water, and about 95 percent of our country's available fresh surface water.

If the Great Lakes were a nation, it would be the third largest economy in the world, with a GDP of more than \$6 trillion. Yet before our eyes, they are succumbing to an ecological disaster of epic proportions, and an economy that struggles to reinvent itself. So for the 21st century, the Great Lakes needs what the South had with the Tennessee Valley Authority, or the West got when the Federal Government created the Bureau of Reclamation.

I thank you very much and look forward to working with you as we look forward through the windshield. I yield back.

[Ms. Kaptur's prepared statement follows:]

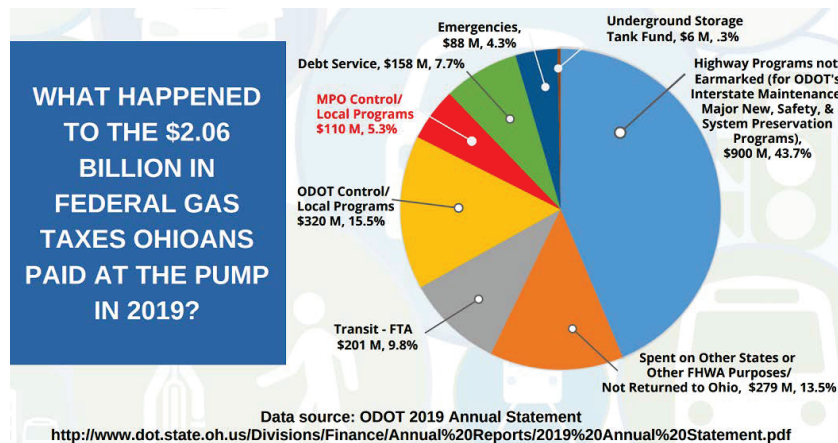
**Prepared Statement of Hon. Marcy Kaptur, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Ohio**

Let me express my deep appreciation for your invitation to testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Our nation is in transition, and your committee is at the helm in ensuring transportation investments are prioritized for 21st century needs. Today I will highlight the need for the surface transportation to support investments in four areas (1) regional funding equity; (2) workforce development in electric vehicle transition; (3) emerging technologies such as Hyperloop; and (4) Amtrak's long distance routes.

1) REGIONAL FUNDING EQUITY, SUPPORT LOCAL CONTROL OF FUNDING

Recommendation: Support Higher Allocations for Metropolitan Planning Organizations in H.R. 2

The redrafted H.R. 2 should support increased local funding. In Ohio, the MPO's receive a sliver of overall federal support. State DOTs have the largest allocation of Ohio gas tax dollars. These MPO's are plugged in to the local decision-making, and have a critical role to the future of regional development.



Graphic produced by the Northeast Ohio Areawide Coordinating Agency (NOACA)

Nationally, the urban and rural divide is dramatic. According to a 2018 analysis by CRS which reviewed the percentage of Good, Fair, and Poor Ride Quality, the 2016 average “good” ride quality in urban areas was 27% and in rural areas, 49%. This difference, a 22% better ride quality in rural areas means rural gas tax users are getting a better return on their investment.

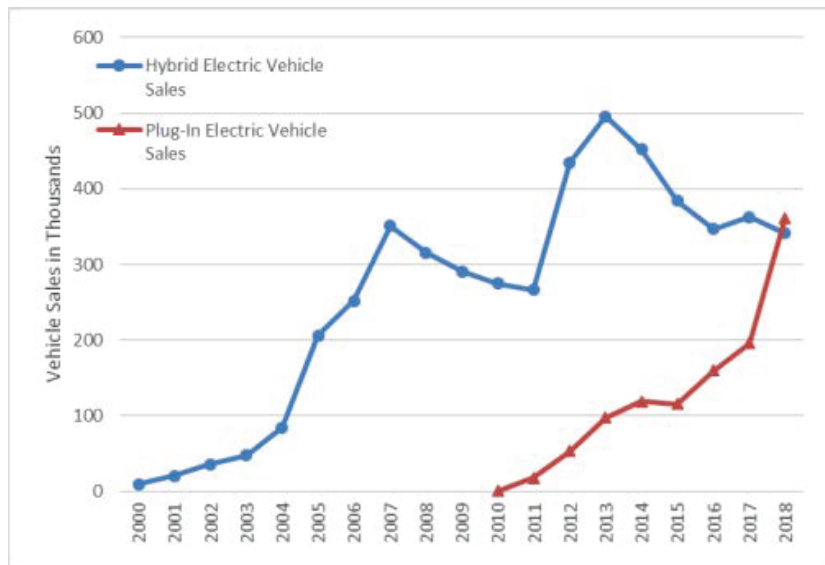
In a state like Ohio, where the population and a large share of the gas tax dollars are produced in urban centers, the equitable solution is to localize a larger share of funding decisions. The updated surface transportation bill should allocate an increased share of funds to MPO’s, which would allow more funding decisions according to local needs.

2) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT, ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Recommendation: Explicitly Mention EV Transition in the FTA workforce development mission

I support a strategic focus for workforce development at the Department of Transportation. With the Build Back Better agenda, this administration has begun to refocus on the importance of electric transition.

The data on this issue is clear, the transition has already begun—huge segments of the market are changing, and electric and hybrid vehicles are the future in all sectors of the market. From nearly zero EV vehicles sold in 2010, to 400,000 produced in 2018. And with new infrastructure proposals from the Biden Administration, I am hopeful that a new day is here.



Source: 2018 CRS Report, 2000–2018 U.S. Annual Hybrid Electric Vehicle and Plug-In Electric Vehicle Sales, Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL), Transportation Energy Data B

Nonetheless, we have tremendous work to accomplish. Last year, your committee recognized the short-sited perspective of DOT on workforce development, and specifically included workforce development provisions. I support Sec. 2601, the National transit frontline workforce training center in H.R. 2. This center will be a first step in preparing frontline transit workers for the transition to, and adoption of 21st century technologies across our transportation system. However, frontline worker assistance is just a first step. The issues facing transit agencies are enormous and require a systematic approach for the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA).

In 2019, the GAO issued a report indicating that no transit specific workforce development strategy exists. It pointed out that FTA had not developed transit-specific workforce projections, and that the workforce development strategy lacks a strategic or holistic approach. GAO’s conclusions are even more troubling when you drill down into the transition for electric vehicle adoption. Transit agencies and the working men and women at the front lines, the skilled workforce rebuilding the buses,

operating the switches, and maintaining the infrastructure of the agencies, face real questions that we must begin to confront. There is an existential threat posed by the transition to electric vehicles for transit agencies. The structure of transit agency maintenance system, the workforce development pipeline, and the skills-based knowledge for the workforce is vulnerable during the upcoming fleet transition.

These transit agencies, the unions and our nation need a strategic vision for helping transit agencies prepare for this future. I am therefore hopeful that the committee will be more explicitly include electric vehicle transition into the workforce challenges faced by frontline workers. I encourage the committee to more exilically recognize that NHTSA and FTA must provide guidance, and a roadmap for agencies to build a more resilient workforce that can confront this transition.

3) EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

Support the NETT Council and Hyperloop Technologies

The Department of Transportation has also stood up an exciting New and Emerging Technologies (NETT) Council. This office has a cross cutting purpose and deserves congressional support. This office provides a strategic and long-term opportunity to support technologies like Hyperloop. Progress is at hand. For instance, last year, the Department of Energy conducted a study on the grid impacts of installing a Hyperloop system. I believe DOT has an important regulatory and leadership role to help guide Hyperloop ensure that one day, a commuter passenger can travel from Downtown Toledo to downtown Chicago in a matter of minutes.

4) AMTRAK

Include a Policy Statement Opposing Cuts to Amtrak Long Distance Routes

I also applaud the committee for including my floor amendment last year expressing the concern for proposed cuts to long distance Amtrak routes. Yes, in emergency funding, Congress supported the long-distance routes. But since the surface transportation lasts into the outyears, Congress must support long-distance routes to ensure they continue to operate during the entire period of the surface transportation bill. These routes offer a critical connection for countless communities, long distance travelers and the represent future for both big and small cities alike.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady. Do Members have questions?

I just thank the gentlelady for her extraordinary advocacy for inland waterways, particularly the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Great Lakes. And they are an invaluable resource and need further Federal investment recognition. So I thank the gentlelady.

With that, we turn to Representative Larson, Connecticut.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JOHN B. LARSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT

Mr. LARSON. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member Graves and distinguished members of the committee. This is, as others have indicated, a great opportunity for Members to express their concerns and present their ideas.

Chairman, I think President Biden and Secretary of Transportation Buttigieg had the I-84/91 interchange in my district in mind when they drew up this plan. You, of course, are no stranger, having been at least a half a dozen times up to visit the site. And I hope to submit for the record a letter from former Chairman Shuster—again, showing the bipartisan nature of infrastructure—who also traveled to the district and saw the basic needs.

The President has outlined in his proposal Projects of National and Regional Significance, redressing historic inequities, modernizing public transportation, infrastructure resilience, multimodal connections to airports, intercity rail, brownfield and Superfund re-

mediation, housing, and physical, social, and civic infrastructure. In all of those categories, this project qualifies.

The 84 and 91 interchange, Chairman, as you alluded to, is a product of the Eisenhower administration, long outmoded, so much so that the I-84 and 91 interchange is the number-one chokehold in the State of Connecticut, number two in New England, and, depending on who you talk to at the national level, between 11 and 30 in terms of its need and urgency.

And it is compounded by the fact, as you know, Mr. Chairman, having visited there, a problem that has occurred in levees that prevent the flooding of the Connecticut River historically, and those levees are experiencing what we call sand piping, which, as you know, contributed to the collapse of the levees in New Orleans in the Ninth Ward. And so it rises to a sense of urgency, compelling urgency, because of the eminent threat, fortunately, that we have been able to dodge over these years. But we can't continue to count on luck. We have to make sure that we are taking very specific action.

I would also like to highlight that contained within this is also what we refer to as the 06120. For people of North Hartford, they know it very well. That is the poorest zip code in the State of Connecticut. And it is also poor because of the way that that highway system cut off and segregated that part of Hartford from the rest of the city. They neither have access to the river, nor do they have access to the city. And what was once an incredible, thriving community now finds itself impoverished because of the result of the dissection by the highway, the Aetna mixmaster, and in East Hartford the mixmaster, which replaced and moved entire communities in the North Meadows.

And so the more-than-a-50-year goal can be accomplished of recapturing the riverfront, with the only Blueways designated river in the Nation, the historic Connecticut River, and also provide us with the opportunity to both fix those levees, adjust the interchange—so, as you point out, that we bring this system into the 21st century. And in doing so, we will have created and helped a number of the inequities.

We mentioned intermodal transportation, and also between North Atlantic Rail and the connection between the tristates of New York, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. The light rail system also connects us to the Bradley International Airport, as well, which is shared by Massachusetts in Chairman Neal's district, and Chairwoman DeLauro's district, as well.

And so that is why we think this is vitally important, again, that we are able to make those intermodal connections, whether it is on foot, by bike, by bus, by automobile, by train, or whether it be by air, the unique opportunity to make sure that we are coordinating this effort and connecting every entity together remains uppermost in our concern.

And so, Mr. Chairman, I would also like to say that we enjoy the support of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the State of Connecticut, and also the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chair.

Commissioner Giulietti has also, Mr. Chairman, asked that, when you come back to Connecticut, that he could be your partner

in the annual bocce ball tournament, which I hope you will attend this September. I look forward to that, your coming to the State of Connecticut again. And most importantly, thank you for this opportunity to come and present our objectives to you on this Members' Day.

And with that I will yield back my time.

[Mr. Larson's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. John B. Larson, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Connecticut**

It's as if President Biden and Transportation Secretary Buttigieg had the Hartford region and the I-84/91 Interchange in mind when they laid out their bold plan for infrastructure, the American Jobs Act. In Connecticut, we're have a proposal that incorporates so many of their priorities including:

- Projects of National and Regional Significance
- Redressing Historic Inequities
- Modernizing Public Transportation
- Infrastructure Resilience
- Multimodal Connections to Airports
- Intercity Rail
- Brownfield and Superfund Remediation
- Housing
- Physical, Social, and Civic Infrastructure

The I-84/91 infrastructure was created during the Eisenhower administration when Interstates 84 and 91 were installed, bisecting the City of Hartford, isolating or eliminating thriving neighborhoods and cutting off access to the Connecticut River. Now, those highways make up the number one chokehold in Connecticut, the number two in New England, and depending on who you talk to between number 11 and number 30 in the Nation. Throw in a levee system that is in need of repair due to sandpiping, and the current situation rises to the height of urgency. An investment to fix these problems incorporates all the various elements of the Biden infrastructure proposal. That's why we're so bullish about this.

Chairman DeFazio has been to the district no less than half a dozen times, and predecessor, Chairman Shuster has been many times as well. Both have recognized the importance and significance of this, and that is why we are before the committee to ask for this important infrastructure funding.

Both the City of Hartford and East Hartford have been blocked from the Connecticut River by virtue of being bisected by I-84 & I-91 and the mixmaster, a massive interchange that contains the equivalent of all the concrete used in downtown Hartford, and takes up the land equivalent of that downtown. This design has created racial isolation in the city. The North End of Hartford, which was once a thriving community, has been cut off from the city and cut off from their waterfront. As a result, the 06120 is now Connecticut's poorest zip code.

This has long been a posterchild for bad planning for the region and now is the historic opportunity to correct that. Now, this project will be the model and prototype of the American Jobs Plan.

We can end this racial isolation, fulfil a fifty-year goal of recapturing the only National Blueway-designated river, and fix a traffic chokehold which is currently a tri-state concern.

Connecticut DOT Commissioner Joseph Giulietti and Connecticut Governor Ned Lamont have embarked on a design build study to do just this, by realigning I-84 and 91, and eliminating the mixmaster and Atena viaduct. I want to thank the committee for its time, and look forward to pressing this issue. I'm glad to be working hand and glove with Governor Lamont and Commissioner Giulietti on this because of its vital importance to the State of Connecticut.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. While I might accept him as a partner on my team if he is a ringer, we will have to chat about his skill level. But I thank the gentleman.

You know, I do think that the 84/91 is the sort of project that the President and Secretary Buttigieg had in mind when they proposed this new program. It would be a new program. Therefore, it

will have to be authorized, and will have to go through the authorization process in order to receive funding, and we will set some criteria as we move forward there. So I thank the gentleman for his persistent advocacy.

We next move to our former committee colleague, and the foremost advocate for infrastructure on the Ways and Means Committee, and perhaps one of the foremost advocates—well, maybe there are a couple of others up there—for infrastructure projects in the United States of America, Representative Blumenauer, my colleague from Oregon.

TESTIMONY OF HON. EARL BLUMENAUER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON

Mr. BLUMENAUER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your kind words, for your leadership, for what the committee is doing, preparing us to rebuild and renew America.

You know, I had the opportunity to serve on this committee for my first decade in Congress. Some of my best memories are serving on the T&I Committee and working in a bipartisan fashion with you, and Mr. Oberstar, Bud Shuster. It was terrific. I hope we can move forward on a grand scale.

When I last testified before this committee nearly 2 years ago, the reality we face today was nearly unimaginable. We have had over half a million Americans lose their life from COVID-19. The economy was thrust into the worst recession in nearly a century. The climate crisis ravaged communities across the West, and America was forced to finally deal with centuries of racial injustice. These developments necessitate a different response as we deal with infrastructure.

The solution to these interrelated crises is not the status quo, as you have put forth so eloquently, Mr. Chairman. It is a forward-thinking approach on a scale necessary to restore our global competitiveness, equitably invest in communities, combat climate change, and create millions of family-wage jobs.

I was so pleased to see President Biden's American Jobs Plan call for a historic \$2.3 trillion investment in upgrading our infrastructure. The proposal rightly goes beyond bikes, roads, and bridges. It is the most consequential vision to rebuild and renew America in more than two centuries.

This investment, alongside a long-term surface transportation reauthorization bill that you have been pioneering, is a necessary step to build back from the recession and usher in a more prosperous, clean, and just future. I have long supported many of the proposals included in both the President's plan and in your Moving Forward Act.

First among those is my work in expanding transportation options for individuals in communities, large and small. The troubling increases in pedestrian and cyclist deaths in recent years requires that Congress increase funding for transportation alternatives, target Highway Safety Improvement Program funding on dangerous corridors for vulnerable road users, and, I would hope, enact my Vision Zero Act to allow communities to spend transportation dollars on reducing traffic deaths to zero.

Transportation is the largest source of carbon emissions of any sector, giving this committee a significant influence to tackle the climate crisis. I hope you will promote the work you did in H.R. 2, which was pathbreaking, to continue to integrate climate into every transportation program.

I also hope you will continue to endorse an increased share of the Federal Government for transit projects: an increase in the “small starts” cap, and my legislation to integrate bikeshare and micro-mobility in the transit system. By making our transportation more interconnected and more reliable, individuals can finally have realistic choices about their mode of transportation.

Too often Federal transportation policies have failed to solve problems and, indeed, created problems for future generations. Our transportation policy should focus on the future of transportation and give communities the tools they need for decades to come. This includes continued support for the State road user charge pilot projects and bringing the concept to the Federal level through a national pilot project.

We should increase the cap on passenger facility charges for aviation and provide local policymakers with a better understanding of the secondary influences of autonomous vehicles, which can be rather unsettling.

The scale of the American Jobs Plan may sound large, and it is, but it is the result of restoring funding after decades of under-investment, something this committee has been deeply concerned about. Too often, Democratic and Republican administrations have failed to lead on infrastructure. But this is our moment to go big and be bold, by modernizing our public transit, investing in transportation electrification, and redressing historic inequities, not just fixing roads and bridges. Congress can rebuild and renew America to compete in the 21st century.

I look forward to being your partner on the Ways and Means Committee. That is, after all, why I reluctantly left T&I to go to Ways and Means, was to get you the \$1 trillion or \$2 trillion you need to make this happen, and I look forward to being your partner in this Congress. Thank you so very much.

[Mr. Blumenauer’s prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Earl Blumenauer, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Oregon**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this committee today.

After serving as the City of Portland’s Commissioner of Public Works, I had the opportunity to serve on this Committee for my first decade in Congress. Some of my best memories in Congress are serving on the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and working in a bipartisan fashion to meet the challenges of America’s transportation system.

When I last testified before this Committee nearly two years ago, the reality we face today was nearly unimaginable. In the past year, more than half a million Americans lost their lives from COVID-19, the economy was thrust into the worst recession in nearly a century, the climate crisis ravaged communities across the West, and America was forced to finally deal with centuries of racial injustice.

These developments necessitate a different response.

The solution to these interrelated crises is not the status-quo, it is a forward-thinking approach at a scale necessary to restore our global competitiveness, equi-

tably invest in communities, combat the climate crisis, and create millions of family-wage jobs.

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The scale of the American Jobs Plan may sound large, and it is, but it is the result of restoring funding after decades of underinvestment.

Too often Democratic and Republican administrations have failed to lead on infrastructure. This is our moment to go big and be bold. By modernizing our public transit, investing in transportation electrification, redressing historic inequities, and fixing crumbling roads and bridges, Congress can rebuild and renew America to compete in the 21st century.

I look forward to being your partner on the Ways and Means Committee to produce a once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman for his compelling testimony, his continued advocacy and willingness to get us whatever balances we require for a robust 21st-century bill as we move forward. So I thank him.

With that we would move on to the next panelist. I read off the whole panel, so be ready to follow the person in front of you.

Representative Kilmer, Representative Pascrell, Representative Bucshon, Representative Peters, Representative Bobby Scott, and Representative Costa.

With that, Representative Kilmer, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DEREK KILMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

Mr. KILMER. Thank you, Chairman and Ranking Member Graves. Thanks for hosting today's Members' Day hearing, and for your leadership.

I appreciate the opportunity to share with you persistent concerns that face the district I have the honor of representing, which I know are also shared by so many other regions across our country, including yours, Mr. Chair.

I grew up in Port Angeles, a timber town on the Olympic Peninsula of Washington State. I was in high school right around the time the timber industry took it on the chin. And during that time, I saw a lot of my friends' parents and a lot of folks in my community lose their jobs. And it had a big impact on me. It is why I have spent most of my adult life trying to figure out how to make sure we are doing a better job of helping communities, so that folks aren't getting left behind in our society and in our economy.

Over the years that I have spent working in and on behalf of our region, I have seen firsthand how access to the funding and resources needed for critical infrastructure investments have made a real difference for communities in our neck of the woods. It is because of these infrastructure investments that small businesses and students can get connected online. It is because of these infrastructure investments that we can fund critical projects that will also help get folks to work in good-paying jobs. And it is because of these infrastructure investments that we can protect access to clean drinking water and safeguard our public health. These investments are urgently needed, and I am pleased for the opportunity to get to work on advancing these important priorities.

Now, that being said, I have also seen firsthand how, even when those critical resources are available, persistent challenges continue to face economically distressed communities. Specifically, I have come to notice three recurrent problems in our current system.

First, even with the considerable investment of Federal resources, there can be a lack of community capacity to actually reach those dollars. Distressed or small communities don't necessarily have the financial capacity to employ grant writers who can navigate that complex system of Federal grants and loans.

Second, a lot of communities aren't just facing short-term problems that can be fully addressed with short-term solutions. Indeed, there are a lot of communities, like those in my home district, that have experienced decades of challenge. While one-off grants can be greatly helpful, it is clear to me that these communities need more persistent help to solve their concerns in a more sustainable way.

Third, different communities have different needs. Some communities need investments that will help to create jobs after decades of economic downturn; others need targeted assistance for brownfield cleanup, or investments in other types of infrastructure needs. Some communities need to see investments in workforce development, while others may need resources that support job retention such as childcare or other earned benefits.

That is why I think it is important that we address these long-standing challenges in a new and different way. It is why I have led the development of a new bill called the Build Back Better Act, a bill that would establish a new 10-year Federal grant program, administered by the Economic Development Agency, to provide long-term, flexible assistance to persistently distressed communities and local labor markets.

Among other things, the grants could be used to address regional labor market and local labor market needs, including land and site development, or basic infrastructure and housing, job training, and workforce outreach and job retention programs. These Build Back

Better grants would have a transformational impact on distressed urban, suburban, and rural areas that would benefit from this long-term, flexible assistance. It will help to create prevailing-wage jobs, provide resources to help residents access and retain employment, increase local per capita income, and drive long-term, sustained economic growth and opportunity.

As a Nation, I believe that we need an economic opportunity agenda that empowers communities, that spurs widely shared economic growth, and increases local earnings, so that our communities can get a real leg up. None of us want the main export of our communities to be young people.

I am grateful for your leadership, Mr. Chairman, and your partnership. And as the committee continues to work to build on the comprehensive infrastructure package that the House passed last Congress, and to implement the Biden administration's American Jobs Plan, I look forward to working with you to incorporate this proposal, the Build Back Better Act, so that we can finally provide the long-term, dedicated support these communities need to create sustained job growth and economic opportunity.

I provided additional details regarding eligibility and targeting of those resources in a two-pager that I have submitted for the record. [The information follows:]

**Build Back Better Act—Fact Sheet, Submitted for the Record by
Hon. Derek Kilmer**

THE BUILD BACK BETTER ACT

REP. DEREK KILMER (WA-06)

CHAIR EMERITUS, NEW DEMOCRAT COALITION

The COVID-19 crisis precipitated the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression, and is exacerbating existing inequities,¹ including place-based opportunity gaps.² We need a bold, innovative agenda to spur widely-shared economic growth and create more opportunities for more people in places that have been left behind.

The Build Back Better Act (BBBA) would establish a new federal block grant program at the Economic Development Agency (EDA) to empower persistently distressed communities³ with flexible 10-year *Build Back Better Grants (BBBGs)* to meet local economic development needs, create good jobs, invest in their workers and businesses, connect local residents to opportunities and resources for long-term success, and build back better with lasting opportunity and economic growth.

- *Why local control?* The needs of communities differ. For some, the barrier to growth may be inadequate broadband access or poor freight mobility, in which case, they could use these grants for infrastructure development. Others may need more workers with skills in growing industries, so could use BBBGs to invest in training and educational opportunities. Or, they may need support for brownfield re-development and infrastructure investments to support greenfield development, job retention resources like childcare services, or support for small business and entrepreneurs. Communities know best what their challenges are, and solutions should be locally-led.

¹ Bartik, Tim, et al, "Stimulus steps the US should take to reduce regional economic damages from the COVID-19 recession," *Brookings Institute & W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research* (Mar 2020)

² Fikri, Kenan et al, "Uplifting America's Left Behind Places: A Roadmap for a More Equitable Economy," *Economic Innovation Group* (Feb 2021)

³ Bartik, Tim, "Helping American's distressed communities recover from the COVID-19 recession and achieve long-term prosperity," *Brookings* (Sep 2020) & Bartik, Tim, "Broad Place-Based Jobs Policies: How to Both Target Job Creation and Broaden its Reach," *W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research* (Nov 2020)

- *Why flexible use?* As much as the needs from one community to another can vary, they also are likely facing multiple challenges that need a diverse set of solutions. Direct spending on services such as workforce outreach and training, infrastructure and housing development, job retention programs like childcare, and resources for small businesses and entrepreneurs are among the most cost-effective ways to boost lasting employment and wage growth for local workers. Developing and investing in a truly comprehensive economic development approach that addresses each economic challenge through a wide range of programs and activities will maximize communities' efforts and investments.
- *Why direct long-term help via formula funding?* Distressed communities are far more likely to have needs not addressed by short-term, ad-hoc grants, and often are not eligible to receive direct federal assistance through existing block grant programs. Distressed communities are also the least likely to have the capacity to navigate the maze of competitive federal grant programs. BBBG funding is based on each communities' level of economic distress and provides the consistent, longer-term help, along with robust technical assistance from the EDA, needed to design, implement, and carry out a comprehensive, long-term economic development strategy.
- *Why distressed communities?* These places were hurting prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and have seen their challenges exacerbated by the ensuing recession. Many were left behind following the Great Recession or by the changing economy as certain sectors declined, like the timber industry in Washington state. These communities have largely been left out of the investment, wealth, innovation, and opportunity concentrated in a handful of major metro areas, and have been unable to transform their economies and rebuild. They are most in need of jobs, and by investing in these areas, America has the greatest opportunity to expand overall employment, diversify geographic opportunity, and boost the national economy.

ADDITIONAL DETAILS

- *Administration:* The Build Back Better Grant program would be administered by the Economic Development Agency (EDA), leveraging the expertise and resources of the EDA to provide thorough technical assistance and funds to help eligible communities develop, implement, and carry out 10-year comprehensive economic development strategies and activities, administer the grants, and conduct oversight of the programs.
- *Eligible Areas:*⁴ Persistently distressed local labor markets and local communities would be eligible to receive assistance under this Act.
 - *Local labor markets* are discrete Core Based Statistical Areas (CBSAs), or metropolitan and micropolitan statistical areas, and commuting zones (CZs). Local labor markets with a five-year average prime-age employment rate that is two and a half percent or more below the national five-year average prime-age employment rate are eligible to receive the grant.
 - *Local communities* are individual units of local government, tribes, and territories within a discrete local labor market that is not distressed. Local communities with a five-year average prime-age employment rate that is five percent or more below the applicable local labor market five-year average prime-age employment rate and national five-year average prime-age employment rate, and which meet other certain criteria, are eligible to receive the grant.
- *Eligible Uses:* Eligible communities would develop a 10-year comprehensive economic development strategy for addressing the unique local economic challenges, closing their prime-age employment gaps, increasing per capita income, and creating sustained economic opportunity. BBBGs could be used for a wide variety of purposes, including:
 - *Business advice* for small and medium-sized local businesses and entrepreneurs, such as manufacturing extension services and small business development centers.
 - *Land and site development*, such as brownfield redevelopment, research and technology parks, business incubators, business corridor development, and Main Street redevelopment.
 - *Infrastructure and housing*, such as improvements in transit, roads, broadband access, and affordable and workforce housing development.

⁴ Bartik, Timothy J. and Austin, John C., "The program that could revitalize both red and blue America," *Brookings Institute* (Feb 2021)

- *Job training* oriented to regional or local labor market needs, such as customized job training programs run by local community colleges in partnership with local businesses.
- *Workforce outreach programs* that reach out to lower-income neighborhoods and embed job placement and training services in neighborhood institutions.
- *Job retention programs* for support services such as job success coaches, childcare services, or transportation support.
- *Other* uses deemed appropriate by the EDA.
- *Allocation*: Eligible communities could receive a maximum block grant equal to the cost of closing half of the prime-age employment rate gap for that area, subject to cost-sharing. The formula is determined by the eligible community's population, level of distress, and other factors. The Federal share of the project cost would be a minimum of 50 percent and a maximum of 100 percent, depending on the level of distress and the needs of the communities.
- *Labor Standards*: Requires robust labor standards and local prevailing wages for laborers and mechanics employed by contractors and subcontractors on projects and activities outlined in the plan, consistent with the Davis-Bacon Act.

Please reach out to Britt Van, Policy Director, New Democrat Coalition (Britt.Van@mail.house.gov) and Katie Allen, Legislative Director, Rep. Derek Kilmer (Katie.Allen@mail.house.gov) for more information.

Mr. KILMER. And again, I thank you for your leadership and for the opportunity to speak before the committee today.

Thank you.

[Mr. Kilmer's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Derek Kilmer, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Washington**

Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

Thank you for hosting today's Member Day hearing and for your leadership. I appreciate the opportunity to share with you the persistent concerns that face the district I have the honor of representing, which I know are also shared by so many other communities across our country.

You may know that I grew up in Port Angeles—a timber town on the Olympic Peninsula in Washington State. I was in high school right around the time the timber industry took it on the chin. During that time, I saw a lot of my friends' parents, and a lot of folks in my community, lose their jobs. It had a big impact on me, and it is why I've spent most of my adult life trying to figure out how to make sure we are doing a better job of protecting communities so that no one gets left behind in our society and economy.

Over the years that I've spent working in, and on behalf of, our region, I've seen firsthand how access to the funding and resources needed for critical infrastructure investments has made a real difference for communities in our neck of the woods. It's because of these infrastructure investments that small businesses and students can get connected online. It's because of these infrastructure investments that we can fund critical projects that will also help get folks to work in good-paying jobs. It's because of these infrastructure investments that we can protect access to clean drinking water and safeguard our public health. These investments are urgently needed, and I'm pleased for the opportunity to get to work on advancing these important priorities.

That being said, I have also seen firsthand how—even when these critical resources are available—persistent challenges continue to face distressed communities. Specifically, I've come to notice three recurrent problems in our current system.

First, even with the considerable investment of federal resources, there can be a lack of community capacity to actually reach those dollars. Distressed or small communities don't necessarily have the financial capacity to employ grant writers who can navigate the complex system of grants and loans needed to access this funding.

Second, a lot of communities aren't just facing short-term problems that can be fully addressed with short-term solutions. Indeed, there are a lot of communities—like those in my home district—that have experienced decades of decline. While one-off grants can be greatly helpful, it is clear to me that these communities need more persistent help that will solve their concerns in a more sustainable way.

Third, different communities have different needs. Some communities need investments that will help to create jobs after decades of economic downturn. Others need targeted assistance for brownfield clean up, or investments in other types of infrastructure needs. Some communities need to see investments in workforce development, while others may need resources that support job retention such as child care and other earned benefits.

That's why I think it's critically important we address these longstanding challenges in a new and different way. It's why I have led the development of the Build Back Better Act—a bill that will establish a new, 10-year federal grant program administered by the Economic Development Agency to provide long-term, flexible assistance to persistently distressed communities and local labor markets. Among other things, the grants could be used to address regional labor market and local labor market needs including land and site development, basic infrastructure and housing, job training and workforce outreach, and job retention programs.

These Build Back Better grants would have a transformational impact on distressed urban, suburban, and rural areas that would benefit from this long-term, flexible assistance. It will help to create prevailing wage jobs, provide resources to help residents access and retain employment, increase local per capita income, and drive long-term, sustained economic growth and opportunity.

As a nation, I strongly believe that we need an economic opportunity agenda that empowers communities, spurs widely shared economic growth, and increases local earnings so that our communities can get a real leg up. None of us want the main export of the communities we represent to be young people.

I am grateful for your leadership and partnership.

As the Committee continues to work to build on the comprehensive infrastructure package (H.R. 2) that the House passed last Congress and to implement the Biden Administration's American Jobs Plan, I look forward to working with you to incorporate this proposal—the Build Back Better Act—so that we can finally provide the long-term, dedicated support these communities need to create sustained job growth and economic opportunity. I have provided additional details regarding eligibility and targeting of these resources in the two-pager that I submitted for the record.

Thank you again for your leadership and for the opportunity to speak before the Committee today.

Mr. DEFazio. I thank the gentleman, and I share his concern for communities like he grew up in. And that is reflected in a good deal of my district.

And I have raised the issue of a new program in EDA to provide predevelopment and other assistance for these chronically depressed areas with Secretary Raimondo, and she was quite interested in the concept. We are having discussions with her.

And then I was on a call with Gene Sperling this morning, and he is very excited about the potential for the \$3 billion that the Rescue Act put into the Economic Development Agency. And that is where I think we can probably work out something along the lines of what the gentleman has proposed. So I thank him for his ideas and advocacy.

With that we move on to Representative Pascrell.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. BILL PASCRELL, JR., A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY**

Mr. PASCRELL. Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, I want to thank you very much for the opportunity to highlight my priorities as you work on a surface transportation reauthorization bill.

I think some of us have been here long enough to remember we used to have 5-year plans. Democrats and Republicans would come together, as you pointed out, as a few of your testifiers pointed out today.

I am here to join Congressmen Sires, Donald Payne, and Tom Malinowski from New Jersey in advocating for New Jersey. And,

as a former member of this committee, I know the work it entails, and you do a fantastic job.

I might say kudos to you, Chairman DeFazio, not that you need them from me, but you stuck with it. And I remember the grunting and groaning of all of us as we headed into the last 10 years.

Our roads are aging, our bridges are crumbling, and our roads are congested. New Jersey rail commuters have suffered enough on a bridge nearly as old as the Stone Age. The most heavily traveled bridge with a deficient rating in New Jersey is the span of I-80 crossing the Passaic River. I hear my constituents demanding relief through their blaring horns, commuting on century-old infrastructure. Every minute or hour delayed is one less minute or hour that parents can spend with their families.

And I must say, Mr. Chairman, if you can remember, the point was brought out many, many times under the great leaderships of this committee in the past. And what was pointed out? The more you do for infrastructure, the less anxiety is created because you will know that a bridge is going to be completed. You will know that a road is going to be completed. An airport is going to be completed, et cetera. And you can't tell now. You can't tell.

The White House reminded me of our need this week by giving us a D-plus on its Infrastructure Report Card. I was a teacher, and I could tell you a D-plus can't make it. It wasn't a grade you were pleased with. So I would like to highlight a few projects of importance, and I hope, Mr. Chairman, you can get our grades up a little higher.

While an end is near for the Gateway project's environmental review submitted way back in 2018, it is taking too long to get here. We have long needed to totally rebuild the Hudson River rail tunnels that connect New York and New Jersey, pointed out by Congressman Wolf—but he wasn't a Democrat—close to 12 years ago—14 years ago. Nothing has changed. We must expand commuter rail capacity under the Hudson to keep up with the demand, and this need has been exacerbated since the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy in 2012.

Passing this next milestone is a big step. I look forward to working hand-in-glove with the President to finally finish the job.

One component of this project is the Portal Bridge spanning the Hackensack River. It is a relic built from a past time, when the Philadelphia Athletics won the World Series. I am not kidding. That is how old it is. We must upgrade this dangerous structure and modernize our cross-river transportation.

It is dead wrong that New Jerseyans and all who travel on the Northeast Corridor have been forced to traverse a bridge dating back to President Taft, and we won't stand for it. We are not going to play second fiddle in New Jersey.

I must also mention that we need more access to public transportation throughout northern New Jersey. New Jersey is the most densely populated State in America. There is no more room for major roadways. Transit has lessened our road congestion, and improved what is some of the worst air quality in the Nation. Certainly, buses can and must play an important role in the expanding transit access.

The Hudson-Bergen Light Rail is in desperate need of expansion. It can also be a resource. Since it began operating in 2000, this system has revitalized older, urban and suburban areas in New Jersey. By several estimates, thousands of residential units and extensive commercial development can be traced to this system. However, progress has been stalled on extending these lines throughout North Jersey, and this committee can help get them back on track.

The Northern Branch Corridor Project expansion could finally put the Bergen in Hudson-Bergen. It has had engineering proposals and environmental studies. It has local support but needs access to Federal funding. The cross-county line to provide access to folks in my hometown of Paterson is currently being re-envisioned, as well.

I hope the reauthorization you are considering and the American Jobs Plan can be our savior, and I wish you the best of luck. If anybody deserves it, Mr. Chairman, it is you.

[Mr. Pascrell's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Bill Pascrell, Jr., a Representative in Congress
from the State of New Jersey**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you very much for the opportunity to highlight my priorities as you work on a surface transportation reauthorization bill. I also want to thank my delegation colleagues on this committee, Congressmen Albio Sires, Donald Payne, Jr. and Tom Malinowski, for their work advocating for New Jersey. As a former member of this committee, I know the work it entails, and they do a fantastic job.

Our roads are aging, our bridges are crumbling, and our railways are congested. North Jersey rail commuters have suffered enough on a bridge nearly as old as the Stone Age. The most heavily traveled bridge with a deficient rating in New Jersey is the span of I-80 crossing the Passaic River. I hear my constituents demanding relief through their blaring horns commuting on century old infrastructure. Every minute, or hour, delayed is one less minute or hour that parents can spend with their families.

The White House reminded me of our need this week by giving us a D+ on its Infrastructure Report Card. I was a teacher and I can tell you D+ wasn't a grade you were pleased with. So, I'd like to highlight a few projects of importance.

While an end is near for the Gateway Project's environmental review submitted way back in 2018, it's taken too long to get here. We have long needed to totally rebuild the Hudson River rail tunnels that connect New York and New Jersey. Former Governor Chris Christie set our cause back over a decade. We must expand commuter rail capacity under the Hudson to keep up with demand. And this need has been exacerbated since the damage caused by Superstorm Sandy in 2012. Passing this next milestone is a big step to finally replacing this decaying structure. I look forward to working hand in glove with President Biden to finally finish the job.

One component of this project is the Portal Bridge spanning the Hackensack River. It is a relic built from a past time when the Philadelphia Athletics won the World Series. We must upgrade this dangerous structure and modernize our cross-river transportation. It is dead wrong that New Jerseyans and all who travel on the Northeast Corridor have been forced to traverse a bridge dating back to President Taft, and we won't stand for it.

I must also mention that we need more access to public transportation throughout northern New Jersey. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the America. There is no more room for major roadways. Transit has lessened our road congestion and improved what is some of the worst air quality in the nation. Certainly, buses can and must play an important role in expanded transit access.

The Hudson-Bergen Light Rail is in desperate need of expansion, can also be a resource. Since it began operation in 2000, this system has revitalized older urban and suburban areas in New Jersey. By several estimates, thousands of residential units and extensive commercial development can be traced to this system. However, progress has been stalled on extending these lines throughout North Jersey and this committee can help get them back on track. The Northern Branch Corridor Project

expansion can finally put the Bergen in Hudson-Bergen. It has had engineering proposals and environmental studies. It has local support but needs access to federal funding. The cross-county line to provide access to folks in Paterson is currently being re-envisioned as well.

I hope the reauthorization you are considering, and the American Jobs Plan, can be our savior. Thank you very much for your time and the opportunity to testify today.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman, and I thank him in particular for pointing out that the very robust economic development that generally follows these commuter lines ultimately has a very positive rate of return to State, local, and even the Federal Government, in addition to mitigating congestion and climate change. So I thank the gentleman.

With that we would move to the next witness, Representative Bucshon.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. LARRY BUCSHON, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA**

Dr. BUCSHON. Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Completing Interstate 69 is one of the most important infrastructure projects in the United States, truly a project of national significance. It will eventually span 2,400-plus miles, connecting the Canadian and Mexican borders. I-69 runs through the States of Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Michigan, and my home State of Indiana.

Today I-69 consists of multiple disjointed sections, and you can see that in image 1 in my written testimony. Breaks in the interstate make the corridor less safe and efficient. The Ohio River crossing is one of the most significant existing breaks. It is a bridge between Indiana and Kentucky. Once completed, the Ohio River crossing will make I-69 contiguous between the Canadian border and Memphis, Tennessee.

In 2016, the Governors of Indiana and Kentucky agreed to split the development and planning costs of the Ohio River crossing, and this can be seen in image 2 in my written testimony.

The project has undergone a NEPA review that was published and is now awaiting a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration that is expected this summer.

The bridge itself is projected to cost around \$850 million, but will rise to \$1.497 billion, with current financing and other planning costs. Funding is not expected to be available until 2027 or later, based on current State-level planning.

An additional 3-year expected bridge construction time means construction cannot be complete for another decade, at the earliest. This delay will be costly to health and safety, and to the economy.

Obtaining a contiguous I-69 is an important goal. Currently, traffic must be redirected off of I-69 onto roads not intended to handle the types of volume or vehicles that an interstate does. This traffic is often redirected through urban areas. The Ohio River Crossing Environmental Impact Study found that interstates have crash rates 73 percent lower than divided four-lane highways in urban areas. The same study found interstates have crash rates 58 percent lower than four-lane divided highways in rural areas. A

2004 Environmental Impact Study found that completing I-69 just between Indianapolis and Evansville, Indiana, would result in 30,000 less serious crashes over a 20-year period. These statistics show the hidden costs that Americans along this unfinished interstate are paying.

Completing I-69 and the Ohio River crossing also have profound economic impacts. Canada and Mexico are already the top export trading partners of six of the eight States that I-69 goes through. I-69 also connects to 22 other strategic interstate highways, and major manufacturing and agricultural centers. And this can be seen in image 3 in my written testimony.

The implementation of the USMCA indicates that commercial traffic along the route will increase. This compounds with national shipping trends that project 70 percent of freight in the United States moves on the highway system. This figure is expected to increase by 50 percent by 2040. The same 2004 Environmental Impact Study found completing the Evansville-Indianapolis stretch of I-69 would save 650,000 vehicle-hours traveled, and hence, vehicle emissions will be lower.

Completing this I-69 segment would also bring an additional \$3.5 billion in additional personal income to the region over 20 years.

These fiscal benefits came from completing just the 170-mile stretch of the interstate. I am confident these results would be replicated along the entire corridor as it is completed.

This expected growth could also be stunted or could even become dangerous if reliable and efficient routes are not in place to handle increased traffic volumes that are projected. Completing the Ohio River crossing is essential to completing the I-69 corridor.

I am proud to work with the Department of Transportation and any other stakeholders to ensure that our request to speed I-69 completion is using taxpayer dollars responsibly and conforming to all relevant laws and authorities.

As a large infrastructure package is being considered, funding the Ohio River crossing for I-69 should be seriously considered, as it is clearly a project of national significance. As I have mentioned, this will not only save lives, but will stimulate economic activity across the central part of the United States. In addition to decreased emissions, it will have an impact on our goal of addressing climate change.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you, Ranking Member, for allowing me to have this opportunity to testify before the committee. I yield.

[Dr. Bucshon's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Larry Bucshon, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to come before this committee today and talk about one of the most critical ongoing infrastructure projects in the United States, Interstate 69. I-69 connects the Canadian and Mexican borders, running through Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Louisiana, Arkansas, Michigan, and my home state of Indiana.

While the I-69 system will eventually span more than 2,400 miles, today it consists of multiple disjointed sections (see Image 1), which makes the corridor less safe

and efficient. One of the most significant breaks in the interstate exists at the Ohio River Crossing on the border between Indiana and Kentucky. Once completed, this bridge would make I-69 contiguous for hundreds of miles between Port Huron on the Canadian border and Memphis, Tennessee.

In 2016, the governors of Indiana and Kentucky issued a Memorandum of Understanding to split the development and planning costs of the I-69 Ohio River Crossing project (see Image 2). Since then, the bridge has undergone a NEPA review that was subsequently published and is awaiting a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration this summer. Indiana and Kentucky have agreed to share the bridge construction costs, which are expected to be approximately \$850 million for the bridge itself and is expected to increase to \$1.497 billion with financing and other planning costs. Subsequently, the project will be waiting for funding to become available, which is currently not expected until 2027, or even later. With an expected bridge construction time of three years, this means that the northern half of I-69 will not be contiguous for over another decade at the very earliest—a delay that will prove costly to health and safety and to the economy.

A contiguous I-69 is a goal that this committee must help achieve as quickly as possible. Currently, when an existing stretch of I-69 ends, traffic must redirect off the interstate onto roads that are not intended to handle the volume of traffic or types of vehicles that an interstate highway is capable of, often redirecting them through crowded urban areas. An environmental impact study for the Ohio River crossing found that in urban areas, interstates have average crash rates that are about 73 percent lower than divided four-lane highways. In rural areas, average interstate crash rates are about 58 percent lower than divided four-lane highways. A 2004 Environmental Impact Study of completing I-69 between Indianapolis and Evansville, Indiana, found that its construction alone would result in approximately 30,000 less serious crashes over a 20-year period. These staggering figures show the hidden costs that Americans along the unfinished interstate are paying for delays in construction today.

Another reason that I-69 and its Ohio River Crossing must be quickly completed is the substantial positive economic impact that will occur as a result of completion. I-69 is a critical route for trade between the United States, Canada, and Mexico, as those countries are already the top export trading partners of six of the eight states that I-69 runs through. The interstate will also play a large role in fostering domestic travel by connecting to 22 other strategic interstate highways, and major manufacturing and agricultural centers (see Image 3). Now that USMCA is in effect, commercial traffic along the route is only expected to increase. This compounds with national trends in shipping that show 70% of the nation's freight moves on the highway system today, and that freight is expected to increase by 50% by 2040.

The 2004 Environmental Impact Study estimated that just completing the route between Evansville and Indianapolis would translate into over 650,000 vehicle-hours saved per year, and bring over \$3.5 billion in additional personal income over 20 years to Southwest Indiana. These are benefits from completing a 170 mile stretch of the interstate, and are ones that I am confident would be replicated in your own states and districts along the length of the interstate across the nation as more and more of the corridor is interconnected. This expected growth bodes well for the American economy, but could be stunted, or even become dangerous, if there is not a reliable and efficient route that can handle the tremendous traffic volumes that are expected in upcoming years.

I am proud to continue working with relevant Departments of Transportation and other local stakeholders to ensure that any requests to speed the completion of I-69 are an efficient and responsible use of taxpayer dollars that conform to all relevant laws and authorities and requirements of the committee.

This committee should make completing Interstate 69, and more specifically completion of the Ohio River Crossing, a priority to facilitate safe and efficient trade and travel for years to come.

Thank you.

IMAGE 1:

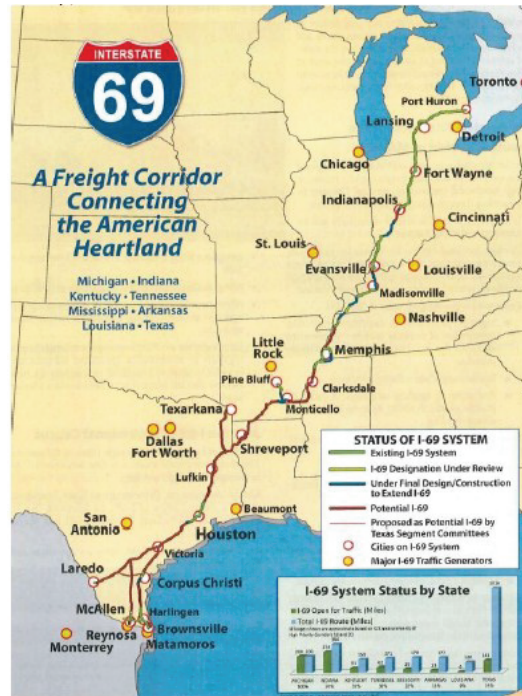


IMAGE 2:

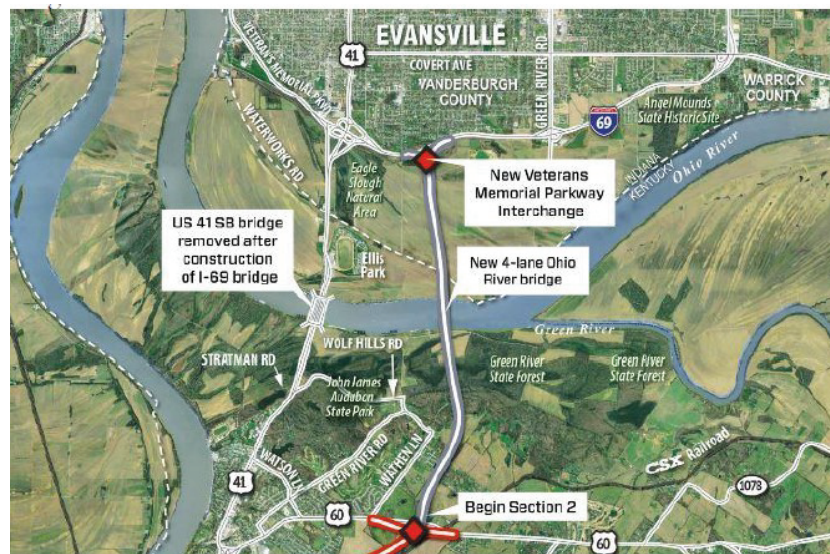
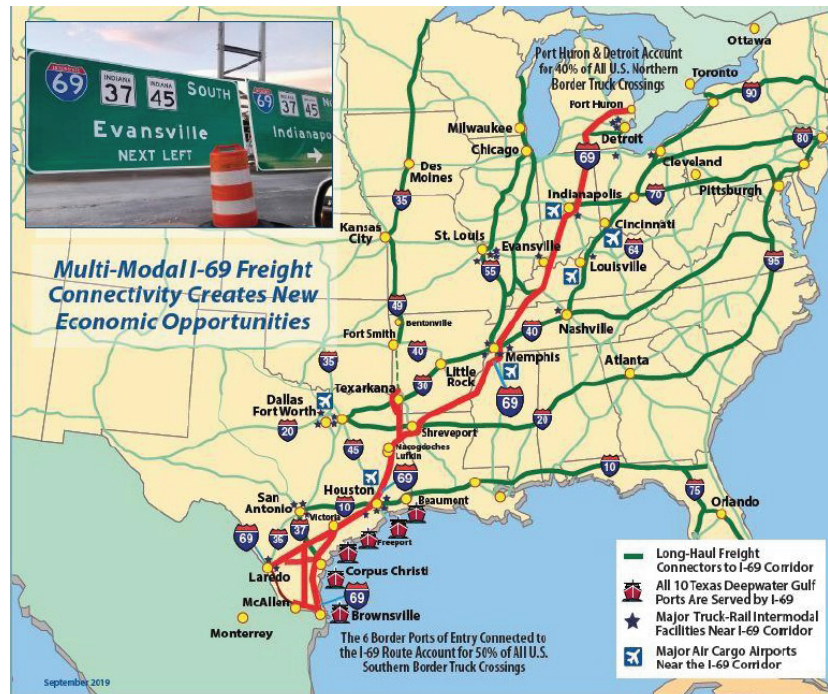


IMAGE 3:



Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. I thank him for pointing out that we need a Federal partner for major projects, that with the two States' combined assets, that they can't even begin to address this project until 2027. For too long the Federal Government has been absent. We haven't adjusted the Federal gas and diesel tax since 1993. So that is why we are looking at a very robust bill, and it would include projects of national regional significance, and I thank the gentleman for his testimony.

We would now move to Representative Peters.

TESTIMONY OF HON. SCOTT H. PETERS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. PETERS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Graves, and thanks for hosting Members' Day for your colleagues like me to share our requests for the committee in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

I would like to highlight two issues that affect my district and the country as a whole. One is the link between public transportation and housing, and the second is Amtrak, particularly in southern California.

First, I want to stress the importance of investing in public transportation that prioritizes decongesting our roads, increases sustainability, and supports regional housing planning. And I urge the committee to continue to improve transit infrastructure to encourage more commuters to take public transit and reduce vehicle-

miles traveled. The Federal Government can only support a limited number of projects. We have to prioritize projects that will generate the ridership that will demonstrably offer automobile alternatives and minimize greenhouse gas emissions, not to mention increased farebox recovery.

To this end, we need to ask local and State governments, in exchange for the massive Federal transit investments we make in local communities, to commit to increasing density and building more housing along transit corridors. Large and small cities across the country and across California struggle to build enough housing and keep rents affordable for families. Between 2005 and 2014, California built a little more than 300 homes for every 1,000 new residents. At the same time, the Federal Government is supporting transit projects that are routed far from housing, which undercuts performance and farebox recovery.

This week I reintroduced the Build More Housing Near Transit Act, H.R. 2483, that would help incentivize a more thoughtful approach to building housing during the construction of large transit projects. My bipartisan bill modifies the Capital Investment Grants program to fast-track applications that conduct a housing feasibility assessment to determine how and where housing units could be built near new transit stops. It also provides a scoring boost to projects that can demonstrate a local commitment to changing land use policies to accommodate market-rate and affordable housing.

This bill is important because it shifts the discussion of land use policy to the beginning of the conversation. The Federal Government can spur livable, sustainable communities, and it is our responsibility to the taxpayer to make sure we maximize their investment. The bill is supported by a wide array of organizations, including Transportation for America, the American Planning Association, Smart Growth America, Up for Growth Action, Congress for New Urbanism, as well as the Mortgage Bankers Association, National Association of Home Builders, and the National Apartment Association.

I am grateful to Chairman DeFazio and the committee for including the language for the Build More Housing Near Transit in last year's H.R. 2, and I hope we can pass it again and include it this year, as well.

Second, I want to say we need to make substantial investment in the Amtrak system to make it a viable and enticing public transportation option outside of its most popular route, the Northeast Corridor. The second busiest intercity rail corridor in the Nation, the LOSSAN Corridor, begins in San Diego. It carries \$1 billion worth of goods and 8 million passengers a year and ensures critical military access as a designated Strategic Rail Corridor Network.

The corridor is vital to our regional, State, national, and international economies, yet portions of the corridor are literally falling into the ocean. Tracks run along the Del Mar Bluffs, which, as recently as last month, had another portion collapse into the sea. This latest collapse occurred within 35 feet of the tracks, tracks that carry passengers and freight multiple times a day. Trains are now directed to traverse this area at a reduced speed, and these are not sustainable conditions, to put it mildly.

While we see routine major investments in the Northeast Corridor, funding is lacking for the Nation's second busiest intercity corridor. And I am hopeful that President Biden's recently proposed \$80 billion plan for Amtrak will include a significant, transformative investment in the San Diego to Los Angeles routing.

In my district, the Amtrak largely runs parallel with Interstate 5, the main freeway that runs north-south from Mexico to Canada. And riding the Amtrak provides a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean, comfortable seating, and Wi-Fi. And taking the train should be an obvious and enticing option for avoiding gridlock on the 5. But because there has been so little investment in upgrading service, a trip from San Diego to Los Angeles on Amtrak takes over 3 hours, versus 2 hours in a car. So it is no surprise the 5 freeway remains packed at all times of the day, that it really isn't a viable other option.

With additional funding to improve service and travel times between San Diego and L.A., Amtrak could remake the way southern Californians commute and travel. And I urge the committee to think a little bit about southern California for future investments. It is past time.

Thanks for your time and consideration of these matters. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other issues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[Mr. Peters' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Scott H. Peters, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

Thank you for hosting "Member Day" for your colleagues like me to share our requests and priorities for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

I'm here to highlight two issues that affect my district and the country as a whole, including

1. issues of public transportation, density, and housing; and
2. improving Amtrak for Southern California.

First, I would like to stress the importance of investing in public transportation that prioritizes decongesting our roads, increases sustainability, and supports regional housing planning.

I urge the Committee to continue to improve transit infrastructure to encourage more commuters to take public transportation and reduce vehicle miles traveled. The federal government can only support a limited number of projects. We must prioritize projects that will generate the ridership that will demonstrably offer automobile alternatives and minimize greenhouse gas emissions.

To this end, we need to ask local and state governments, in exchange for the massive federal transit investments we make in local communities, to commit to increasing density and building more housing along transit corridors. Large and small cities across the country, and across California, struggle to build enough housing and keep rents affordable for families. Between 2005 and 2014, California built a little more than 300 new homes for every 1,000 new residents.

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My bipartisan bill modifies the Capital Investment Grants program to fast track applications that conduct a housing feasibility assessment, to determine how and where housing units could be built near new transit stops.

It also provides a scoring boost to projects that can demonstrate a local commitment to changing land use policies to accommodate market-rate and affordable housing.

This bill is important because it shifts the discussion of land use policy to the beginning of the conversation. The federal government can spur livable, sustainable communities, and it's our responsibility to the taxpayer to make sure we maximize their investment.

The bill is supported by a wide array of organizations, including Transportation For America, the American Planning Association, Smart Growth America, Up For Growth Action, and the Congress for New Urbanism.

I am grateful to Chairman DeFazio and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for including the language from Build More Housing Near Transit in last year's HR 2, and I hope it will be included again this year.

Secondly, we need to make substantial investment in the Amtrak system to make it a viable and enticing public transportation option outside of its most popular route, the Northeast Corridor. The second busiest intercity rail corridor in the nation, the LOSSAN corridor, begins in San Diego. It carries \$1 billion worth of goods and 8 million passengers a year, and ensures critical military access as a designated Strategic Rail Corridor Network.

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While we see routine major investments in the Northeast Corridor, commensurate funding is lacking for the nation's second busiest intercity corridor. I'm hopeful that President Biden's recently proposed \$80 billion plan for Amtrak will include a significant, transformative investment in the San Diego to Los Angeles routing. In my district, the Amtrak largely runs parallel with Interstate 5, the main freeway that runs north-south from Mexico to Canada. Riding the Amtrak provides a beautiful view of the Pacific Ocean, comfortable seating, and WiFi. Taking the train should be an obvious and enticing option for avoiding gridlock on the 5, but because there has been so little investment in upgrading service, a trip from San Diego to Los Angeles on Amtrak takes over three hours, versus two hours in a car. It's no surprise the 5 freeway remains packed at all times of the day—there isn't a viable other option.

With additional funding to improve service and travel times between San Diego and Los Angeles, Amtrak could remake the way Southern Californians commute and travel, and I urge the Committee to think beyond the Northeast Corridor for future investments. It is past time.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these matters. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these and other issues, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DEFazio. I thank the gentleman. I particularly thank him for his advocacy and pointing out the critical linkage between transit and potential for housing and economic development. And I was pleased to work with him in the last Congress, and fully intend to include similar provisions in this legislation.

I would like to see a lot of improvement in Amtrak, existing Amtrak. I just call it higher speed rail before—we are going to do high-speed rail, but Amtrak needs higher. The issue he has between San Diego and L.A.—I am in Eugene, it is 112 miles to Portland. It is supposed to be only about 3 hours to get there by train, a train that can go 112 miles an hour. And regularly it doesn't even meet that schedule. So we have got to work on these issues, and I appreciate his pointing that out.

Now, the chair of the Education and Labor Committee, Bobby Scott.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, and members of the committee. I represent Virginia's Third Congressional District, where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth Rivers, which presents both challenges and opportunities.

My district is home to the Port of Virginia, one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. With 95 percent of our Nation's trade moving by water, it is essential that the port is able to maintain operations. The Third Congressional District is also home to multiple shipyards, and neighbors the Norfolk Naval Station, the largest naval base in the country.

Unfortunately, due to sea level rise, both attributable to climate change as well as historic subsidence, these same waterways also pose a serious risk. Some studies estimate that sea level rise will be as much as 7 feet by the end of the century, and that places the Hampton Roads region as the second largest population center at risk for sea level rise in the Nation, behind only New Orleans. The city of Norfolk is specifically at risk of flooding due to high tides, nor'easters, and hurricanes. As the home of the Norfolk Naval Station and numerous other Federal and military facilities, this recurrent flooding also poses a severe national security risk.

State and local officials in Virginia already appreciate the significant threat sea level rise poses to Hampton Roads. Unfortunately, the cost to proactively and aggressively address this problem head-on is far too great for any city to bear by itself. And while Hampton Roads has already spent considerable sums of money to address the rising water and implement a resilient infrastructure where feasible, the scope of the entire project to actually address the problem is expected to total into the billions of dollars.

Hampton Roads is also home to significant traffic backups throughout the region, especially at waterway crossings. A widening of Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel is primarily being financed with local and State revenue from sales and gasoline taxes and the Hampton Roads Transportation Fund. But it requires Federal support. There is a limit to how much and how many of these major projects can move forward without Federal assistance.

For example, the downtown and midtown tunnels connecting Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia, were in such a state of disrepair and need of expansion that the Commonwealth had few options, other than to enter into a lopsided, public-private partnership leading to egregious tolls for decades to come.

The Hampton Roads region is also in vital need of public transit investments. Airports, roads, and bridges are in need of repair, and I would encourage the committee to commit crucial Federal support to infrastructure in every State.

As chair of the Education and Labor Committee, I look forward to working with this committee to address the existing shortage of skilled workers and lack of diversity within the construction sector. In my district, for example, the Hampton Roads Bridge-Tunnel expansion will be creating about 1,000 jobs. But I just heard from union members about the shortage of skilled workers in this area.

So any infrastructure bill should also include investments in workers, so that they will have the skills needed to build and expand a cleaner and greener infrastructure.

For far too long the funding for workforce programs has been too small and too disjointed, spread across multiple agencies, rather than through an intentional approach coordinated with existing public workforce systems. So I look forward to working with you to support the recruitment of a diverse workforce, and ensure the recruitment for these projects happens in and around the communities impacted by them.

The Education and Labor Committee also looks forward to working with you, as we insist that school infrastructure must be part of the infrastructure package. Despite the evidence linking well-resourced facilities, well-supported teachers, and healthy buildings to better academic life and outcomes, the Federal Government presently dedicates no money to public school infrastructure improvements. My legislation, the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act, H.R. 604, would invest \$100 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bonding authority targeted at high-poverty schools. Students and educators deserve to go to school every day in a safe and welcoming building. And we should be investing in community colleges also—both their facilities and technology, to grow local economies, and improve energy efficiency and resiliency.

And Mr. Chairman, thank you again for allowing me to share my priorities for a resilient infrastructure package drafted by your committee. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Scott's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves and members of the Committee, thank you for providing me this opportunity to discuss the priorities of Virginia's third district in the upcoming infrastructure legislation.

I represent the 3rd congressional district of Virginia where the Chesapeake Bay meets the James, Nansemond, and Elizabeth Rivers, which presents both challenges and opportunities. My district is home to the Port of Virginia, one of the largest and busiest ports on the eastern seaboard. With 95 percent of our nation's trade moving by water, it is essential that the port is able to maintain operations. The 3rd district is also home to multiple shipyards and neighbors Norfolk Naval Station, the largest naval base in the U.S.

Unfortunately, due to sea level rise, both attributable to climate change as well as historic subsidence, these same waterways also pose a serious risk. Some studies estimate this rise to be as much as 7 feet by the year 2100, the Hampton Roads region is the second largest population center at risk from sea level rise in the nation, behind only New Orleans. The City of Norfolk is specifically at risk from flooding due to high tides, nor'easters, and hurricanes. As the home of Naval Station Norfolk and numerous other federal and military facilities, this recurrent flooding also poses a severe national security risk.

State and local elected officials in Virginia already appreciate the significant threat sea level rise poses to Hampton Roads. Unfortunately, the cost to proactively and aggressively address this problem head-on is far too great for any city to bear by itself. While Hampton Roads has already spent considerable sums of money to address the rising water and implement resilient infrastructure where feasible, the scope of the entire project to actually address the problem is expected to total in the billions of dollars.

Hampton Roads is also home to significant traffic backups at the waterway crossings and throughout the region. The widening of the Hampton Roads Bridge Tunnel is primarily being financed with local revenue from sales and gasoline taxes in the

Hampton Roads Transportation Fund but it requires state and federal support. There is a limit to how much and how many of these major transportation projects can move forward without federal assistance. For example, the Downtown and Midtown Tunnels connecting Norfolk and Portsmouth Virginia were in such a state of disrepair and need of expansion that the Commonwealth had few options other than to enter into a lopsided private-public partnership leading to egregious tolls for decades to come. The Hampton Roads region is also in vital need of public transit investments. Our airports, roads, and bridges are in need of repair and I would urge the committee to commit crucial federal support for infrastructure in every state.

As the Chair of the Committee on Education and Labor, I look forward to working with your Committee to address the existing shortage of skilled workers and lack of diversity within the sector. In my district, for example, the Hampton Roads Bridges and Tunnel expansion creates 1,000 jobs, but I just heard this week from union members about an existing skilled trade shortage in the area.

Any infrastructure bill should also include investments in workers so that they have the skills needed to build and expand to cleaner and greener infrastructure are needed. For too long the funding for workforce programs has been too small and too disjointed, spread across multiple agencies rather than through an intentional approach driven through the existing public workforce system. I look forward to working with you to support the recruitment of a diverse workforce and to ensure that recruitment for these projects happens in and around the communities impacted by them.

School infrastructure must also be a part of any infrastructure package we consider. Despite the evidence linking well-resourced facilities, well-supported teachers, and healthy buildings to better academic and life outcomes, the federal government dedicates no money to public school infrastructure improvements. My legislation, the Reopen and Rebuild America's Schools Act (H.R.604) would invest \$100 billion in grants and \$30 billion in bond authority targeted at high-poverty schools. Students and educators deserve to go to school every day in safe and welcoming buildings. We should also be investing in community college facilities and technology to grow local economies, improve energy efficiency and resilience.

Mr. Chairman, thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to share my priorities for a comprehensive and resilient infrastructure package drafted by this committee.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman. Five minutes on the nose. I thank you, in particular, for raising the issue of resilience, sea level rise. We have to anticipate that as we rebuild our infrastructure around the country: sea level rise on the coasts, severe weather events, inland flooding, earthquakes in the West. We want to build it to be resilient, and his offer and work to partner—because we are going to need a lot more skilled workers, and we can reach into communities that have been left behind, and give them the skills they need to become more full participants in this society, as we rebuild. So I thank him for that.

Mr. SCOTT. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. With that we would move on to the gentleman from California, Representative Costa.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JIM COSTA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mr. COSTA. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for your time and patience, and the members of the committee. Your leadership and the members of this committee are going to be critical if we are successful this year in investing in America's infrastructure. We know it is the backbone of our country.

Our canals, ports, and harbors, roads, bridges, highways, and railways have continued to connect us for over two centuries. Alexander Hamilton, at the birth of our country, supported and helped initiate our canal system as a way of connecting a new country and economically binding us. We have continued that effort, and we

know how critical a role infrastructure has played in the development.

But if we are going to continue toward the path of sustainability in light of climate change and other factors that we are dealing with, we must act boldly. And we have an opportunity to not only modernize our systems of transportation and infrastructure, but also rehabilitate existing infrastructure that is in bad need of repair. And this means jobs, jobs, and jobs that will further boom our economy, as we all know.

My district, like all of our districts, has diverse needs, and contains infrastructure which conveys water resources for residential and agricultural use, major highways which support the movement of goods and services for our State and our Nation, and it is also home to the first true state-of-the-art construction—in construction—of high-speed rail.

Therefore, we need to look at all the facets of investments, I believe. The BUILD Grant is an incredible tool that can help fix our highways and roads, such as State Route 99 and Route 41 in my district. But much more must be done. Your efforts with H.R. 2, Mr. Chairman, and the INVEST Act that reauthorizes the Surface Transportation Act, as others have mentioned, is going to be critical, because we are living off the investments our parents and grandparents have made a generation and two ago, and we must now act boldly.

As our Nation's population continues to grow, infrastructure must be able to keep up with the everyday demands in the 21st century, in light of climate change and other factors, which continues to intensify droughts in the West with more unpredictable weather patterns, tornadoes in the Midwest, and hurricanes in the South. We see these impacts on our water systems, as you noted, with the rise in coastal tides. It impacts every facet of our infrastructure. And that is why I think it is so important that we introduce legislation.

I am introducing legislation to access Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act, a program that will assist much-needed upgrades and modernization of our water infrastructure around the country. We have canals that are no longer capable of moving water that they were designed for 50 years ago.

In addition to our water resources, we must invest in a clean, eco-friendly, state-of-the-art, 21st-century system of transportation, like high-speed rail, and increase Amtrak service, as you noted with the previous witnesses. Trains in the 1950s and the 1960s used to go over 100 miles an hour. Amtrak today averages 79 miles an hour and less. There is a great deal that we can do, whether it is corridors from Portland to Vancouver, in California, Texas, Florida, the Northeast Corridor, in the Midwest from Chicago down to Atlanta, there are endless benefits to electrified, high-speed rail in connecting people and reducing our carbon footprint.

As I noted earlier, we passed H.R. 2, your legislation to fund intercity passenger rail through the PRIME Grant, which I think is a step in the right direction. But we have to, in addition to that, I think, have dedicated, high-speed rail.

Finally, we need to continue to focus on an infrastructure package with this administration. And I urge the committee to consider

my legislation, the High-Speed Rail Corridor Development Act of 2021, for dedicated, high-speed rail corridor funding across our Nation. Representative Seth Moulton and I are working together to ensure that dedicated high-speed rail funding is a reality for corridors north, south, east, and west. In Europe and in Asia they have been successful over the last 40 years because the Federal Government in those parts of the world created an authorization for continued funding to improve rail and high-speed rail. We should do the same.

Finally, as I said, I think the challenges we face are, one, to reach a bipartisan agreement on what we define as infrastructure.

Two, how we pay for it. Our Republican friends don't like the current pay-fors? I suggest they come up with other pay-fors.

Three, we should incentivize States and local government who have already raised local revenue. Almost 30 States across the country have raised revenue in recent years to improve their transportation needs, as well as local government, many counties. If they have got skin in the game, why don't we incentivize them as a result of that?

The challenge that we have—and I challenge our Republican colleagues and friends—is to show that we can work together to invest in America, and invest in our infrastructure, which is long, long overdue.

I thank the chairman and the committee for your patience today. We have got our work cut out for us.

[Mr. Costa's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Jim Costa, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Good afternoon, thank you Mr. Chairman for holding this Member Day Hearing. It is critical now more than ever we continue to discuss our infrastructure needs as a nation. For the past few years, we have heard the term "infrastructure week" time after time, but no action. Today, I am hopeful with this Administration and with this committee in moving legislation forward towards a sustainable investment for the next generation.

I stand in front of the committee to highlight the infrastructure needs of our nation from investing in our water resources infrastructure to high speed rail. It is essential we take an all-of-the above approach and invest in this diverse amount of infrastructure which continues to connect our nation.

As the representative of California's 16th District, a place I call home, this district and the region of the San Joaquin Valley serves as California's infrastructure backbone. My district has diverse needs as it contains infrastructure which conveys our water resources throughout the state, major highways which support the movement of goods and services throughout the state, and lastly, it is home to California's High Speed Rail project, a first of its kind for our nation.

If we are going to continue towards the path of sustainability as a nation, we must act boldly. We must continue to utilize the benefits of the BUILD Grant to support fixing our highways and roads that serve as major connectors for regions, such as State Route 99 and State Route 41 in my district which both also connect to Interstate 5, a major transportation artery that connects *all* of California.

Climate change continues to intensify droughts in the West with more unpredictable weather patterns that require us to think of "outside-the-box" solutions. That is why I will soon be introducing legislation to ensure access to WIFIA financing for federally-owned, locally ran water infrastructure projects to assist in the much needed upgrades and modernization of water infrastructure projects around our nation.

And lastly, if we are going to reduce our carbon footprint and reduce our global emissions, we must invest in electrified high-speed rail. For too long we have heard the United States is behind when it comes to investing in high-speed rail. Other na-

tions around the world continue to invest in this infrastructure and reap the benefits of regional connectivity and economic opportunity all while reducing carbon footprints. My legislation, the High-Speed Rail Corridor Development Act of 2021 builds upon what our nation has already invested towards high-speed rail. This can be a reality for *all* across our nation and help us continue to connect our regions and communities.

I'd like to thank the Chairman again for allowing me to testify today and look forward to working on an infrastructure package for our nation. I yield back.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentleman—in particular, his advocacy on high-speed rail. I just would correct him. One of the five original designated high-speed rail corridors in the United States was from Eugene to Vancouver, BC, not Portland.

Mr. COSTA. Sorry.

Mr. DEFAZIO. And——

Mr. COSTA. I stand corrected.

Mr. DEFAZIO. No, there has been a lot of talk about Portland, because of Microsoft being involved in a project up there. But it is Eugene.

I also thank him for pointing out the need for water infrastructure. It is becoming more and more and more critical, obviously, in the West and nationwide. The Corps has a massive, massive backlog to bring things up to a state of good repair, close to \$40 billion, and that needs addressing in a 21st-century way, incorporating, where possible, more natural systems.

I thank the gentleman.

With that we would move to the esteemed chair of the Appropriations Committee, Rosa DeLauro.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ROSA L. DELAURO, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT**

Ms. DELAURO. Thank you. Thank you so much, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves. I want to thank both of you for the opportunity to speak today, but also for your commitment to our Nation's infrastructure, and for holding today's Members' Day hearing.

We are in an exciting moment. After decades of inadequate investments in America's physical infrastructure and 4 years of failed "infrastructure weeks," we finally have a partner in the White House who is committed to making transformative investments that will shape our economy in a way that meets the moment. We cannot simply return to normal. Now is the time to make desperately needed investments to rebuild our Nation and create millions of good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced.

According to the 2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure assessment by the American Society of Civil Engineers, our Nation's infrastructure receives the grade of C-minus. By 2039, America's overdue infrastructure bill will cost the average American household \$3,300 a year, or \$63 a week, and the cost and consequences to our economy are significant. A continued underinvestment in our infrastructure at current rates will cost \$10 trillion in GDP, more than 3 million jobs, and \$2.4 trillion in exports over the next 20 years.

We cannot wait. Now is the time to invest, reimagine, and rebuild the American economy by building the architecture for our Nation's future.

As we work together, I would ask to bring your attention to a national infrastructure development bank, a concept I have been advocating since 1994. It is a public-private partnership establishing an innovative financing mechanism to help supplement gaps in investment. The bank would be a bold step forward to address the tremendous shortfall in infrastructure investment that would create jobs, spur long-term economic growth, and improve our global competitiveness. It would make the critical investments needed that goes beyond surface transportation, like water, energy, and telecommunications, which is critical to our national growth strategy. Projects would be evaluated through an analysis of the economic, environmental, and social benefits, as well as the cost.

Importantly, there is no minimum dollar amount required for a project to receive financing from the bank. A project can be of significance, yet not be major in terms of a dollar amount attached to it. And employee protection provisions are included to ensure that, while the infrastructure bank creates new jobs, it also does not displace current workers.

I also want to say a thank you for your commitment to serving and rebuilding communities through the Member-designated projects. This designated funding stream is vitally important as we continue our efforts to build back better. In Connecticut's Third Congressional District, the T&I Member-designated project funding would deliver far-reaching, forward-thinking progress for Connecticut families. And as such, we will be submitting a number of projects.

Let me just briefly mention one of them. The funding would finance one of our largest and our most essential infrastructure projects, the city of New Haven's Downtown Crossing Project. This is a project that I have worked tirelessly on since my days as chief of staff for New Haven mayor Frank Logue in the 1970s. And yet, decades later, I am still fighting for its completion. We have completed two of three phases to transform one of our critical expressways into urban boulevards designed for pedestrian and bicycle use, as well as low-speed motor vehicle traffic. With a dedicated funding stream, Downtown Crossing Project would finally be complete.

Infrastructure is the lifeblood of our economy. I strongly believe it must be a central component of a long-term national growth strategy that returns us to a country that builds, rather than one that just consumes. Through the comprehensive infrastructure package to be crafted by this committee in the coming months, we can change the course of infrastructure spending in our country.

Thank you. Thank you so much for your attention to my statement, as well to my legislation, but also to the issue of infrastructure. Your leadership is essential as the Congress considers new investments to address our growing infrastructure deficiencies. I look forward to working with you on this critical matter, and I yield back.

[Ms. DeLauro's prepared statement follows:]



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Connecticut**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for your commitment to our nation's infrastructure and for holding today's Member Day hearing. We are in an exciting moment. After decades of inadequate investments in America's physical infrastructure and four years of failed 'Infrastructure Weeks,' we finally have a partner in the White House who is committed to making transformative investments that will shape our economy in a way that meets the moment. We cannot simply return to normal. Now is the time to make desperately needed investments to rebuild our nation and create millions of good-paying jobs that cannot be outsourced.

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We cannot wait. Now is the time to invest, reimagine, and rebuild the American economy by building the architecture for our nation's future.

As we work together, I would ask to bring your attention to a national infrastructure development bank, a concept I have been advocating for since 1994. It is a public-private partnership that would establish an innovative financing mechanism to help supplement gaps in investment. The bank would be a bold step forward to address the tremendous shortfall in infrastructure investment, while creating jobs, spurring long-term economic growth, and improving our global competitiveness.

It would make the critical investments needed that goes beyond surface transportation, like water, energy, and telecommunications, which is critical to a national growth strategy. Projects would be evaluated through an analysis of the economic, environmental, and social benefits, as well as the cost. Importantly, there is no minimum dollar amount required for a project to receive financing from the Bank. A project can be of significance, yet not be major in terms of a dollar amount attached to it. And, employee protection provisions are included to ensure that while the infrastructure bank creates new jobs, it also does not displace current workers.

And I want to thank you for your commitment to serving and rebuilding communities through Member Designated Projects. This designated funding stream is vitally important as we continue our efforts to build back better.

In Connecticut's Third District, the T&I Member Designated Project funding would deliver far-reaching, forward-thinking progress for Connecticut families. As such, we will be submitting a number of projects, but I want to briefly mention one of them. The funding would finance one of our largest and most essential infrastructure projects: The City of New Haven's Downtown Crossing Project. This is a project that I have tirelessly worked on since my days as Chief of Staff for New Haven Mayor Frank Logue in the 1970s, and yet, decades later, I am still fighting for its completion. We have completed two of three phases to transform one of our critical expressways into urban boulevards designed for pedestrian and bicycle use, as well as low-speed motor vehicle traffic. With the dedicated funding stream, the Downtown Crossing project I have been fighting for, for decades, will finally be complete.

Infrastructure is the lifeblood of our economy, and I strongly believe it must be the central component of a long-term national growth strategy that returns us to a country that builds, rather than one that just consumes. Through the comprehensive infrastructure package to be crafted by this committee in the coming months, we can change the course of infrastructure spending in our country.

Thank you for your attention to my statement, as well as my legislation. Your leadership will be essential as Congress considers new investments to address our growing infrastructure deficiencies. I look forward to working with you on this critical matter.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady. And like on this committee, we are going to do Member-designated projects. I congratulate the gentlelady for bringing back high-priority, local projects that are proposed by Members to the appropriations process with appropriate protections.

And this 1994 for an infrastructure bank, I started in 1996 with Bud Shuster on the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. I finally got it done last December. Maybe you are close, Rosa.

Ms. DELAURO. Listen, you can never give up, you know? My mama taught me two things in her 103 years—don't take no for an answer, and never give up. So here we go. Thank you so, so much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you.

Mr. DEFAZIO. I thank the gentlelady.

At this point, Representative Lamb, a member of the committee from Pittsburgh, who I had the pleasure of visiting in a virtual event last week with his constituents to talk about infrastructure needs, and have also visited his district, and he has been a prime mover, in particular, on inland waterways and other critical infrastructure.

And the order of witnesses will be—when Conor takes over—will be Representatives Arrington, Schrader, Porter, and Schrier.

OK, Representative Arrington, you can begin, and Representative Lamb will take the chair.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JODEY C. ARRINGTON, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. ARRINGTON. Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Sam Graves, and members of the T&I Committee, and certainly my friend, Conor Lamb, who I have really enjoyed teaching how to play basketball since I have been a Member of Congress. I don't know if he is there. I can't see his expression. I hope he is laughing.

I want to talk about the food, fuel, and fiber that feeds and clothes not only the American people, but people all over the world, and the supply of energy that undergirds this greatest economy, the envy of the world, and provides the energy needs of billions of people around the world. In fact, this Ports-to-Plains Corridor, as we call it, which is the backbone of rural America, it is Middle America. And these are rural communities that are the lead in production, agriculture, and energy, both fossil and renewable.

And with the trade agreement with Canada and Mexico, they are the largest trading partners, and making that a better and stronger agreement, where the United States is going to benefit to the tune of \$70 billion in additional growth in GDP, we need to have the critical infrastructure and transportation arteries to take this important product throughout the country to our ports and beyond.

And when you look at the States from Texas, all the way up Middle America to Canada through North Dakota, this represents about 70 percent. This area, this swath of the heartland represents over 70 percent of production, ag, and energy. And again, that is both renewable and fossil. My district alone, 29 counties in west Texas, is the largest renewable wind production center in the country, producing three times more than even the State of California. So it is all of the above. It is critical supply chain for the country.

There is nothing in my mind more important, in terms of infrastructure, than maintaining and strengthening our food security and our energy independence, not just for the United States, but for North America, especially, again, with our enhanced relationships and new trade deal with USMCA, which was a bipartisan ef-

fort and great for the country, great for our workers, manufacturers, and ag producers.

So my project that I have been working on with Henry Cuellar and colleagues from both sides of the aisle—and by the way, my friend, Representative Cuellar, this particular part of the Ports-to-Plains Corridor that we are presenting starts at the largest inland port in America, which is Laredo, Texas, and includes other ports, including Eagle Pass and Del Rio.

But my priority for this 117th Congress, Mr. Chairman, is for H.R. 1608, the Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021, to be included in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill. This legislation designates the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Colorado, and a portion of the Heartland Expressway between I-70 and I-76 in Colorado as a future interstate highway.

Again, food, fuel, and fiber, food security, energy independence, and these God-fearing, freedom-loving patriots who live in the heartland, the backbone of this country, making sure that we can efficiently and safely push that product to our communities throughout the country, and to people all around the world. We are going to see the population double around the world. And by 2030 we are going to have 1 billion people who already live in energy poverty, and we will have 1 of every 4 people living with food insecurity. And they are all counting on our farmers, ranchers, and energy producers in this corridor to meet that growing demand.

Hey, guys, thank you so much for listening, and letting me present our priority for the Ports-to-Plains Highway. Thanks for your good work, and I am happy to take any questions. And God bless your efforts.

[Mr. Arrington's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jodey C. Arrington, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Texas**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

Thank you for providing Members the opportunity to share our priorities for the 117th Congress. As you continue to develop your proposal to rebuild our nation's infrastructure, I'd like to take this Member's Day hearing as an opportunity to urge the inclusion of H.R. 1608, The Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021, in any surface transportation reauthorization legislation. This is an issue of great importance and value to the constituents of TX-19 and rural America.

This legislation designates the Ports-to-Plains Corridor in Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma and Colorado and a portion of the Heartland Expressway in Colorado as a Future Interstate. Both the Ports to Plains Corridor and the portion of the Heartland Expressway are Congressionally designated High Priority Corridors on the National Highway System.

The Ports-to-Plains region includes states which lead our nation's energy and agriculture economy, producing over \$44 billion in agriculture goods, or 22 percent of total U.S. agriculture production. The Ports-to-Plains corridor generates over \$166 billion annually in trade with Canada and Mexico, accounting for almost 20 percent of all U.S.-North American trade. Simply put, Middle America provides the food, fuel, and fiber that strengthens our nation.

As the United States dominates the global trade market, we must also look to strengthen infrastructure in rural communities. Access and upgrades to adequate rural infrastructure not only promote the wellbeing and quality of life for people living in rural communities, but also ensures the safe and efficient transportation of food, fuel, and fiber throughout the country.

My priority for the 117th Congress is for H.R. 1608, The Ports-to-Plains Highway Act of 2021, to be included in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization

bill. This critical step in highway expansion would improve economic development, safety, and efficiency for America's Heartland. I look forward to working with you this Congress on this critical legislation.

Mr. LAMB [presiding]. Mr. Arrington, thank you for your contribution, and I would have a response on the point of basketball, except that the State of Texas had two of our final four teams this year. So I feel like it is not the best year for a kid from Pittsburgh to be talking smack about basketball to a guy from Texas.

I did get to visit Representative Cuellar's district over the weekend, actually, to look at the border. So I have a new understanding of what you are talking about, and I hope that we can work on it in a bipartisan way here in the committee.

Mr. ARRINGTON. Thank you.

Mr. LAMB. Next we have another great champion of rural America, from the Democratic side, Mr. Kurt Schrader, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KURT SCHRADER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OREGON**

Mr. SCHRADER. Thank you very much, Chairman pro tem Lamb. I would like to thank you and Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to provide testimony in advance of the committee's work to reauthorize the surface transportation policy.

Historically, thanks to the leadership of this committee, transportation and infrastructure have been bipartisan issues. There are those that would like to break that tradition in this Congress. I hope this committee and the 117th Congress continue to value bringing Members together from both sides of the aisle for our transportation and infrastructure needs. This could be the uniting moment that the President has been talking about.

The President's plan is a great foundation that goes boldly forward, rebuilding America's infrastructure for the 21st century. But the absence of a long-term, sustainable funding source for the Highway Trust Fund is deeply concerning. It is time to start the transition off the gas tax onto a vehicle-miles traveled, or a weight-mile type of funding mechanism that will serve us into the future.

I would also like to commend the committee's past work, in particular the robust Projects of National and Regional Significance program and the Moving Forward Act. That helps States complete large, very large, infrastructure projects like the Interstate 205 bridge in my district. The project has bipartisan regional support, and the local communities and State are committed to help with the funding. It is a critical connection point that currently sees hours-long congestion. It is a vital freight freeway for our region between Washington State and Oregon.

The State and local officials have put forward an ambitious plan to reinforce this bridge for seismic concerns to maintain access during major disasters, and I hope that programs like this one are kept inside the base package, allowing States to compete for greatly needed Federal assistance on large projects that they can't possibly do on their own.

Bringing Members into the discussion on how best to spend Federal dollars in their district is long overdue, and I commend the

committee for their efforts in this respect. We all know our districts better than agency bureaucrats in Washington, DC.

The safeguards being put in place by the committee will help bring needed transparency to the process, while empowering us to advocate the projects our constituents tell us that they need most, projects, like the Interstate 5 bottleneck at the Aurora-Donald interchange, and a dangerous intersection, Highway 22 and Highway 51 in my district. These projects, like so many others, have broad support from local and State officials. They are willing to put money into the till. The only thing that is missing is some Federal help to finalize that funding. These are the kind of projects that need just a little bit of focus to help save lives, and keep our economy humming.

I also hope that this is expanded beyond surface projects to include other forms of infrastructure. The south jetty at the entrance to Tillamook Bay on the Oregon coast is in critical need of repairs to stop the loss of life from boats exiting and entering the Port of Garibaldi. We recently had a boat capsize, leading to the deaths of two individuals. These jetties are a Federal responsibility. The past decade has seen these projects zeroed out in Presidential budgets. It will only get worse for my constituents because of Federal inaction. So I urge the committee to expand opportunities for Congress to direct spending for critical projects like this one.

Thanks again for the opportunity to outline my concerns as the committee continues its important work. I look forward to seeing a final product that meets the moment and provides a strong investment in our country and its citizens.

And I yield back, thank you.

[Mr. Schrader's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kurt Schrader, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Oregon**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony in advance of the committee's work to reauthorize surface transportation policy. Historically, thanks to the leadership in this committee, transportation and infrastructure have been bipartisan issues. There are those that would choose to break that tradition this Congress. I hope this committee and the 117th Congress continue to value bringing members together from both sides of the aisle on our transportation and infrastructure needs. This could be the uniting moment our President has talked about.

The President's plan is a great foundation that goes boldly towards rebuilding American infrastructure for the 21st Century. But the absence of a long-term sustainable funding source for the Highway Trust Fund is deeply concerning.

I would also like to commend the Committee's past work. In particular, the robust Projects of National and Regional Significance program in the Moving Forward Act that would help states complete large infrastructure projects, like the I-205 bridge and access improvements project in my district. This project has bipartisan, regional support and the local communities and state are committed to funding support. It is a critical connection point that sees hours-long traffic congestion, not only for Oregonians but also for our neighbors across the river in Washington. The state and local officials have put forward an ambitious plan to reinforce the bridge for seismic concerns to maintain access during major disasters. I hope that programs like this one are kept inside the base package, allowing states to compete for greatly needed federal assistance on big projects that they can't do on their own.

Bringing Members back into the discussion about how best to spend federal dollars in their district is long overdue and I applaud the committee for their efforts here. We all know our districts better than agency bureaucrats here in DC. The safeguards being put in place by the committee will help bring needed transparency

to the process while empowering us to advocate for the projects our constituents tell us are most needed. Projects like the Interstate 5 bottleneck at the Aurora-Donald interchange and the dangerous intersection on Highway 22 and Highway 51 in my district. These projects, like so many others, have broad support from local and state officials. The only thing it's missing is some federal help to finalize funding. These are the kinds of projects that just need a little focus that will help save lives and keep our economy humming.

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These jetties are federal responsibility. But the past decade has seen these project zeroed out in presidential budgets due to the cost. It will only get worse for my constituents because of federal inaction so I urge the committee to expand opportunities for Congress to direct spending for critical projects like this one.

Thank you again for this opportunity to outline my thoughts as the committee continues its important work. I look forward to seeing a final product that meets the moment and provides a strong investment in our country and our citizens.

Mr. LAMB. And thank you.

Next up we have, from California, the gentlelady, Ms. Katie Porter, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KATIE PORTER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. PORTER. Thank you so much, committee members and staff, for holding this hearing on advancing our country's surface transportation and infrastructure.

Above the doors of the National Transportation Safety Board academy there is an inscription. It reads, "From tragedy we draw knowledge to protect the safety of us all." By pulling together stakeholders from industry, law enforcement, and all levels of Government, the National Transportation Safety Board has realized its goal time and time again.

As committee members may know, fatalities from aviation accidents are down 99 percent since the board was founded. It is past time to take a similar approach to learning and evaluation in emergency management. And that is why I urge the committee to include in this legislation my proposal for a National Disaster Safety Board. This National Disaster Safety Board would be a non-partisan, independent Government body. It would review management of natural hazards with a holistic approach, evaluating the response at all levels of Government and the private sector and through nonprofits.

I say "natural hazards," and that is for a reason. Disasters are what happens when human beings make wrong decisions in an emergency. Disasters can be avoided, but natural hazards like fires and hurricanes cannot.

The National Disaster Safety Board would address the problem we currently face where an alphabet soup of State and Federal agencies each conduct their own lessons-learned process, and each draw their own parochial conclusions.

It would address a related problem, which is that these different reviews use different data, make disparate recommendations, and are scattered across the internet, when they are publicly available at all.

Look at the example from my home State of California and the 2018 Camp Fire, the deadliest fire in the United States in a cen-

tury, and the biggest environmental cleanup in the history of California. These are terrible statistics. What they are not, though, is lessons. The lessons from the Camp Fire are scattered across half a dozen Government reports, from the Butte County district attorney's office to the National Institute of Standards and Technology, to the California office in charge of watersheds. Each looked at the Camp Fire from a particular point of view. None of them had the credibility or the mandate to do a 360-degree review and say, "This is how we save lives next time."

If we had a disaster board like what I am proposing, we could start to find patterns. We might recognize that wildfires in California have more in common with floods in Louisiana than we realized. And perhaps we could find common solutions, as well.

The Camp Fire also forced the evacuation of more than 50,000 people. And across the U.S., 916,000 people were displaced by natural hazards in 2019. Do the evacuation procedures and emergency networks and systems we have in California reflect the lessons learned over the years in Florida or Texas? The National Disaster Safety Board will give the independent, nonpartisan analysis and recommendations to make sure that the answer to that question is yes.

In the minute I have left, I want to suggest another important way for the committee to protect taxpayer dollars and encourage smart policymaking. From the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act to the CARES Act, we have seen the importance of oversight and accountability when Congress jumpstarts the economy. This is so important for this infrastructure bill, because we are aiming to reorient our economy to better fight climate change.

Electrification of the transportation sector requires coordination between the private sector, multiple Government agencies, and all 50 States. That is a recipe for confusion and delay. So I encourage the committee to make sure that, when it comes to building up zero-emission vehicles and charging infrastructure, the Government has somebody in charge, not a working group, not an office with an acronym, but a person who is empowered and can say, "The buck stops with me on electric vehicles." And I hope to hear that testimony from that electric vehicle czar or similar person in the not-too-distant future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify. I yield back.

[Ms. Porter's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Katie Porter, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for holding this hearing on advancing our country's surface transportation and infrastructure.

Above the doors of the National Transportation Safety Board academy there is an inscription. It reads: "From tragedy we draw knowledge to protect the safety of us all."

By pulling together stakeholders from industry, law enforcement, and all levels of government, the NTSB has realized this goal time and time again. As members of the committee may know, fatalities from aviation accidents are down 99% since the board was founded in 1967.

It is far past time to take a similar approach to learning and evaluation in emergency management, and that is why I urge the committee to include my proposal for a National Disaster Safety Board in this legislation.

The National Disaster Safety Board, or NDSB, would be a non-partisan, independent government body. It would review management of natural hazards with a holistic approach, evaluating the response at all levels of government, in the private sector, and through non-profits.

I say natural hazards and that's for a reason. Disasters are what happens when human beings make the wrong decisions in an emergency. Disasters can be avoided, but natural hazards like fires and hurricanes cannot.

The NDSB would address the problem we currently face where an alphabet soup of state and federal agencies each conduct their own lessons-learned process, and each draw their own parochial conclusions.

It would address a related problem, which is that these different reviews use different data, make disparate recommendations, and are scattered across the internet—when they're publicly available at all.

Take the example of my home state of California and the 2018 Camp Fire.

By any metric, the Camp Fire was historic.

The deadliest fire in the U.S. in a century.

The biggest environmental cleanup in the history of California.

The most expensive natural disaster in the world during a year that included hurricanes Michael and Florence.

These are terrible statistics. What they are not, is lessons.

The lessons are scattered across half a dozen government reports, from the Butte County District Attorney's Office, to National Institute of Standards and Technology, to the California office in charge of watersheds.

Each looked at the Camp Fire from a particular point of view. None had the credibility or the mandate to do a 360 degree review and say: "this is how we save lives next time."

That is a problem, and one I imagine almost every member of this committee has experienced in their own state.

If we had a board like this, we might start to find patterns. We might recognize that wildfires in California have more in common with floods in Louisiana than we realized—and perhaps common solutions as well.

The Camp Fire was a disaster not only because of physical destruction, but because it forced the evacuation of more than 50,000 people who then needed food, shelter, and medical care.

That was a huge challenge, but not a new one in many parts of the country. Of the 916,000 people across the country who were displaced by natural hazards in 2019, most were displaced by floods or storms.

Do the evacuation procedures, emergency networks, and other systems we have in place in California reflect the lessons learned over the years in Florida, or Texas?

The National Disaster Safety Board will provide the independent, non-partisan analysis and recommendations to make sure that the answer to that question is "yes."

In the few minutes I have remaining, I want to address another important way for the Committee to protect taxpayers dollars and encourage smart policy making.

From the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, to the CARES Act last year, we have seen the importance of oversight and accountability and when Congress jumpstarts the economy.

That is especially important in the case of this infrastructure bill, because we are aiming to reorient our economy to meet the existential threat of global warming.

When it comes to electrification of the transportation sector, this will require coordination between the private sector, multiple government agencies, and all 50 states.

This is a recipe for confusion and delay, and so I encourage the committee to make sure that, when it comes to building up zero emission vehicles and charging infrastructure, the government has somebody in charge.

Not a working group, not an office with an acronym, but a person who is empowered and can say "the buck stops with me on electric vehicles." And I hope to hear the testimony of that person in the not-too-distant future.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to testify here today. I look forward to working together on this vital legislation.

I yield back.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Ms. Porter, for such fresh and new ideas. As well, there were some jokes among Members earlier about it taking 30 years to get some of these new ideas off the ground. And I don't think we have that kind of time, with respect to the ideas that you are talking about. So we will take those very seriously.

The next five Members that we have up are Mr. Phillips, Mrs. Bustos, Ms. Meng, Mr. Hagedorn, and Mr. Cloud.

So with that we turn to the gentleman from Minnesota, Mr. Phillips.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DEAN PHILLIPS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Mr. PHILLIPS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman pro tem, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and all of you committee members. I appreciate the time.

I represent Minnesota's Third Congressional District, which includes the western Twin Cities suburbs. We are a proud, a diverse, hard-working community. We are national leaders in healthcare, small business ownership, and hockey fandom. And our biggest export is Minnesota nice. We are also a tolerant community, and one which deeply values the principle of sharing.

But I have to be blunt with all of you. My constituents in Minnesota are growing awfully tired of being one of just eight States in the country that pays more in Federal taxes to Washington than it receives back in Federal programs and support. In 2019 that amounted to Minnesotans sending an extra \$1.8 billion to Washington more than it received back. In contrast, the average State in America receives from the Federal Government nearly \$16 billion more than each State pays in each year. And that imbalance has a profound impact on my district. And nowhere is it felt more strongly than in our woeful infrastructure.

I have met with leadership from every single city and town in my district, and I often hear the exact same things: our communities need 21st-century infrastructure to be competitive. Yes, Congress has been complacent on this issue for far too long. And yes, I will demand action on behalf of our State. So I am here today to honor that promise, and urge your support for a comprehensive, transformational infrastructure package for America.

In Minnesota we have nearly 650 bridges, and nearly 5,000 miles of highway in poor condition. Not only is poor road repair an economic disaster, but it is costing my constituents \$400 million each year, which is a hazard also to public health.

As traffic fatalities have surged statewide in Minnesota, we need a comprehensive approach to address surface transportation in our State, and all of our States.

Water and wastewater infrastructure is another priority for our communities. As local officials have made very clear to me, sustainable water infrastructure not only ensures safe drinking water and a clean environment, but also strengthens our local economies. Experts say that Minnesota needs to invest \$7.5 billion to overhaul its aged and overburdened water systems, and support from Congress will be critical to make sure that transition happens as swiftly as possible.

Another concern, especially following the wake of COVID-19, is the need for high-speed broadband in suburban, exurban, and rural districts like mine. And whether it is students trying to learn online, or an employee or a Member of Congress logging on to a virtual meeting just like this one, our communities need better broadband infrastructure to thrive in an interconnected world.

And I want to close with one more sentiment that I have heard from leaders in my district, both Democrats and Republicans. It is that our communities' infrastructure needs go well beyond roads, bridges, and pipes. Infrastructure is about resiliency. It is about a foundation. It is about modernization. It encompasses everything from climate change mitigation to addressing our country's concerning mental health and addiction crisis. News today was that 87,000 Americans lost their lives to overdoses last year. We had almost 50,000 suicides. People are struggling because of the pandemic, economic challenges, injustice, you name it. And so, at its core, infrastructure is about investing in our people and our future and our country's mental health.

In the aftermath of this once-in-a-generation—God willing—catastrophe, it is time that we come together and make that investment together as a Congress.

So I thank you for your time, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.
[Mr. Phillips' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Dean Phillips, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Minnesota**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Committee for the invitation to speak with you all today.

I have the great honor of representing Minnesota's Third Congressional District, which includes the western Twin Cities metro area. We are a proud, diverse, and hardworking community. We are national leaders in healthcare, small business ownership, hockey fandom and of course, in Minnesota Nice.

Today, however, I must be blunt with you. Few know this, but Minnesota is one of just eight states to pay more in federal taxes than it brings back in support. In 2019, that amounted to Minnesotans sending an extra \$1.8 billion to Washington. In contrast, the average state receives from the federal government nearly \$16 billion more than it pays each year.

That imbalance has had a profound impact on my district, and nowhere is it felt more strongly than in our infrastructure. I have met with leadership from every city and town in Minnesota's Third, and far too often I find that I am repeating myself:

"Yes, our communities need 21st century infrastructure to compete."

"Yes, Congress has been complacent on this issue for far too long."

"And yes, I will demand action on behalf of our state."

I am here today to honor my promise and urge your support for a comprehensive infrastructure package.

In Minnesota, there are more than 650 bridges and nearly 5,000 miles of highway in poor condition. Not only is poor road repair an economic disaster—costing my constituents nearly \$400 million each year—but it is a hazard to public health. As traffic fatalities surge statewide, we need a comprehensive approach to address surface transportation in Minnesota.

Water and wastewater infrastructure is another priority for communities in my district. As local officials have made clear to me, sustainable water infrastructure not only ensures safe drinking water and a clean environment, but also strengthens local economies. Experts say that Minnesota will need to invest \$7.5 billion to overhaul its aged and overburdened water systems, and support from Congress will be critical to ensure that transition happens as swiftly as possible.

Another growing concern, especially following the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, is the need for high-speed broadband in suburban, exurban, and rural districts like mine. Whether it's a student learning online or an employee logging on to a virtual meeting, our communities need better broadband infrastructure to thrive in our increasingly interconnected world.

I want to close with another sentiment I have heard from leaders in my district, Democrats and Republicans alike. Our communities' infrastructure needs go beyond roads, bridges, and pipes. Infrastructure is about resiliency. It's about modernization. It encompasses everything from climate change mitigation to addressing our

country's mental health crisis. At its core, infrastructure is about investing in our future. In the aftermath of a once-in-a-generation catastrophe, it's time to come together and make that investment.

Thank you.

Mr. LAMB. I am disappointed that there was no musical portion of the presentation after showing us that guitar the entire time, but thank you, Mr. Phillips.

And with that we are on to the gentlelady from Illinois, Mrs. Bustos.

TESTIMONY OF HON. CHERI BUSTOS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mrs. BUSTOS. All right, thank you, Congressman Lamb. And I do want to throw out my thanks to Chairman DeFazio for giving so many Members the opportunity to be able to share our transportation and infrastructure priorities with the committee today.

So I served on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for my first three terms in Congress. And so I have a deep appreciation for your critical mission, and the essential work that you are doing. What I would like to do today is summarize and submit for the record a document that outlines the principles that I believe any infrastructure proposal should include, particularly those that address the needs of our small towns and rural communities, so much of which I serve in the congressional district in the central and northwestern and northern part of the State of Illinois.

Because I know that you are working on a surface transportation reauthorization bill right now, I would like to focus my remarks on the priorities for that legislation. However, I do hope that this document will guide your work on all future infrastructure packages beyond the one immediately before us. I believe that, to build a strong foundation for a successful economy, our Nation requires a significant investment. To do this, any proposal needs to meet three goals. First, direct Federal investment to areas with demonstrated need.

Number two, strengthen programs that target support to rural areas and small towns such as technical assistance.

And three, maintain and expand policies like Buy American and Davis-Bacon requirements that support America's manufacturers and America's workers.

Looking specifically to surface transportation, we must balance our investments in new infrastructure with making sure that our existing infrastructure is safe and reliable. For example, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association "Bridge Report" for this year found that, in my home State of Illinois—and by the way, we are home to now the third most bridges in poor condition in the Nation: pretty bad—over 10 percent of the bridges in the congressional district I serve are classified as structurally deficient.

So meanwhile, in 2018, more than 34 percent of major rural roads across the country were rated in poor or mediocre condition. Families in the heartland like the ones I serve rely on surface transportation not only to get to work or to run to the grocery store, but also as an economic connection to the rest of the country. Manufacturers, growers, and producers all rely on roads, on

bridges, on rail, on locks and dams to move their products to market.

Increased freight traffic on roads, coupled with everyday use, have resulted in significant strain on our most important infrastructure, making it critical that we invest more in our highways, our bridges, our rail, all while providing a sustainable funding source for the Highway Trust Fund.

Congress' call to address this lies not only in our economic recovery, but in basic public safety. Promoting public safety also requires raising awareness of Move Over laws. These laws vary from State to State—in Illinois, our Move Over law is known as Scott's Law—but many people don't realize that moving over for a stopped vehicle is more than a courtesy, it is a legal requirement. And after one of my constituents, State trooper Brooke Jones-Story, was struck and killed during a routine traffic stop, I knew that we needed to take action and to prevent this needless loss of life. And as the wife of a sheriff, I am grateful for the work our first responders do every day. I ask that this committee continue to join me in working to keep them safe.

Last Congress, I appreciated that this committee included public awareness campaigns for Move Over laws as eligible expenses in highway safety programs in the Moving Forward Act. It is my hope that you will again prioritize this important initiative.

Just to close, it was our parents' generation that left us with world-class infrastructure. And in order to build back better, we must look to repair the foundation we inherited, as well as build upon it. I look forward to working with all of you on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee on these important initiatives so we can meet that promise for generations to come. And I hope that this can truly be a bipartisan effort.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

[Mrs. Bustos' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Cheri Bustos, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Illinois**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for giving me the opportunity to share my Transportation and Infrastructure priorities with the Committee today.

I served on this Committee for my first three terms, and I have a deep appreciation for its critical mission and essential work.

Today, I would like to summarize and submit for the record a document outlining the principles that I believe any infrastructure proposal should include, particularly those that address the needs of our small towns and rural communities.

Because I know you are working on a surface transportation reauthorization bill right now, I will focus my remarks on the priorities for that legislation. However, I hope this document will guide your work on all future infrastructure packages beyond the one immediately before us.

To build a strong foundation for a successful economy, our nation requires a significant investment. To do this, any proposal must meet three goals:

First—direct federal investments to areas with DEMONSTRATED need;

Second—STRENGTHEN programs that target support to rural areas and small towns, such as technical assistance;

And Third—MAINTAIN and EXPAND policies, like Buy American and Davis-Bacon requirements, that support America's manufacturers and workers.

Looking specifically to surface transportation, we must balance our investments in new infrastructure with making sure that our existing infrastructure is safe and reliable.

For example, the American Road and Transportation Builders Association's Bridge Report for 2021 found that my state of Illinois is home to the third-most bridges in poor condition in the nation. Over 10 percent of the bridges in the congressional district I serve are classified as structurally deficient.

Meanwhile, in 2018, more than 34 percent of major rural roads across the country were rated in poor or mediocre condition.

Families in the Heartland, like those I serve, rely on surface transportation not only to get to work or run to the grocery store, but also as an economic connection to the rest of the country.

Manufacturers, growers and producers all rely on roads, bridges and rail to move their products to market. Increased freight traffic on roads, coupled with everyday use, have resulted in significant strain on our most important infrastructure, making it critical that we invest more in our highways, bridges and rail, all while providing a sustainable funding source for the Highway Trust Fund.

Congress' call to address this lies not only in our economic recovery, but in basic public safety.

Promoting public safety also requires raising awareness of Move Over Laws. These laws vary from state to state—in Illinois, our Move Over Law is known as Scott's Law—but many people don't realize that moving over for a stopped vehicle is more than a courtesy—it is a legal requirement.

After one of my constituents, State Trooper Brooke Jones-Story, was struck and killed during a routine traffic stop, I knew we needed to take action to prevent this needless loss of life. And as the wife of a sheriff, I'm grateful for the work our first responders do every day. I ask that this Committee continue to join me in working to keep them safe.

Last Congress, I appreciated that this Committee included public awareness campaigns for Move Over Laws as eligible expenses in highway safety programs in the Moving Forward Act. It is my hope that you will again prioritize this important initiative.

In closing, my parents' generation left us a world-class infrastructure system, but in order to build back better, we must look to repair the foundation we inherited, as well as build upon it. I look forward to working with you on these important initiatives to meet that promise for generations to come, and hope that this can be a truly bipartisan effort.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, and Mr. Bost is very thankful that you also mentioned the Move Over legislation that he was a part of, as well, again demonstrating the bipartisan spirit that we usually strive for on this committee.

Thank you, Mrs. Bustos, and now we are onto Ms. Meng of New York.

TESTIMONY OF HON. GRACE MENG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Ms. MENG. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, as well as all the distinguished members of this committee. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss several issues that are under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am so grateful for all of your leadership, inclusiveness, and hard work to help our country build back better.

I look forward to submitting for your committee's consideration infrastructure projects that are sure to improve the lives of my constituents in Queens, New York. Some of the projects that will be at the top of my agenda include strengthening our reliance on alternative energy, including through electric vehicle charging stations.

I also want to thank this committee for your continued support of combating aviation noise, an issue that is so important in my

district and so many across the country. As a founding member and former cochair of the Quiet Skies Caucus, I have worked on numerous initiatives—many with members of your committee—to mitigate the deafening airplane noise that has plagued my district for way too long. I thank you and your committee staff for being a tireless leader and partner on these issues and look forward to continuing this work when I reintroduce the Quiet Communities Act.

Lastly, I am excited to discuss with you the issue of menstrual equity, and its importance to our economic and social infrastructure. I know that periods and menstrual products are not the first thing that come to mind when we say transportation and infrastructure. But it is a relevant issue, and an important one, especially during this unprecedented pandemic that has uprooted our economic and social balance.

Access to safe, affordable menstrual products is a basic need, and a healthcare right for 51 percent of the U.S. population. It is estimated that a woman will use up to 16,000 tampons in her lifetime, which equates to at least \$7,000 over the course of her life. One might think these products are ubiquitous and cheap, but many people face difficulty when it comes to affording and accessing them. I know this because I have heard the heartbreaking testimonies from countless people across our Nation.

Research has shown that the lack of access to menstrual products can hinder a person's day-to-day life, making it hard to attend school, go to work, secure job interviews, and pursue opportunities that could lead to economic achievement. That is why later this month I will be reintroducing a comprehensive bill on this issue, the Menstrual Equity for All Act, which will address the hardships that different people face in affording and accessing these products.

Specifically, as it relates to this committee, yesterday I introduced a standalone section from the comprehensive bill that addresses public buildings. The Menstrual Products in Federal Buildings Act would require all public Federal buildings to provide free menstrual products in the restrooms. The U.S. Government is the largest employer in the country. It is estimated that there are over 2.1 million Federal civilian workers. This number does not even include the millions of contractors, grant employees, and others that make up our entire Federal workforce.

The issue of affordability and accessibility is everywhere. We saw it during the longest Government shutdown in history, and we have seen it throughout this pandemic. After all, periods do not wait for pandemics. It is time that our Government finally walks the walk and sets an example by providing free menstrual products in all public buildings, just like we do with toilet paper, paper towels, and hand soap. Doing so will help alleviate the real-life barriers in accessing and affording these everyday products, while normalizing and destigmatizing this monthly necessity and basic human right.

Thank you again for this opportunity to come before your committee today, and I yield back.

[Ms. Meng's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Grace Meng, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, as well as distinguished members of this Committee, thank you for the opportunity to discuss several issues that are under the jurisdiction of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. I am grateful for your leadership, inclusiveness, and hard work to help our country build back better.

I look forward to submitting for your committee's consideration infrastructure projects that are sure to improve the lives of my constituents in Queens. Some of the projects that will be at the top of my agenda include strengthening our reliance on alternative energy, including through electric vehicle charging stations.

I want to also thank this Committee for your continued support of combating aviation noise—an issue that is so important in my district. As a founding member and former co-chair of the Quiet Skies Caucus, I have worked on numerous initiatives—many with members of your committee—to mitigate the deafening airplane noise that has plagued my district for way too long. I thank you and your committee staff for being a tireless leader and partner on these issues—and look forward to continuing this work when I reintroduce the Quiet Communities Act.

Lastly, I am excited to discuss with you the issue of menstrual equity and its importance to our economic and social infrastructure. I know periods and menstrual products are not the first thing that come to mind when we say: "Transportation and Infrastructure." But it is a relevant issue—and an important one—especially during this unprecedented pandemic that has uprooted our economic and social balance. Access to safe, affordable menstrual products is a basic need and a health care right for 51 percent of the U.S. population.

It is estimated that a woman will use up to 16,000 tampons in her lifetime, which equates to at least \$7,000 over the course of her life. One might think these products are ubiquitous and cheap, but many women face difficulty when it comes to affording and accessing them. I know this because I have heard the heartbreaking testimonies from countless girls and women from across our nation.

Research has shown that lack of access to menstrual products can hinder a person's day to day life, making it difficult to attend school, go to work, secure job interviews, and pursue opportunities that could lead to economic advancement. That is why later this month, I will be reintroducing a comprehensive bill on this issue, the Menstrual Equity for All Act, which will address the hardships that different women and girls face in affording and accessing these products.

Specifically, as it relates to this committee, yesterday I introduced a standalone section from this comprehensive bill that addresses public buildings. The Menstrual Products in Federal Buildings Act would require all public federal buildings to provide free menstrual products in the restrooms.

The U.S. government is the largest employer in the country. It is estimated that there are 2.1 million federal civilian workers. This number does not even include the millions of contractors, grant employees, and others that make up our entire federal workforce. The issue of affordability and accessibility is everywhere. We saw it during the longest government shutdown in history, and we have seen it throughout this pandemic. After all, periods do not wait for pandemics.

It is time that our government finally walks the walk and sets an example by providing free menstrual products in all public buildings—just as toilet paper, paper towels, and hand soap are already provided. Doing so will help alleviate the real-life barriers in accessing and affording these everyday products—while normalizing and destigmatizing this monthly necessity and basic human right.

Thank you again for this opportunity to come before your committee.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Ms. Meng, and next we are on to Mr. Hagedorn.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JIM HAGEDORN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA**

Mr. HAGEDORN. Mr. Chairman, thank you. I appreciate the opportunity that you and the committee have offered here to talk a little bit about infrastructure needs, and as far as it applies to our district in southern Minnesota.

I happen to represent the lower tier of Minnesota, so pretty much from Wisconsin to Iowa to South Dakota, and then Iowa up

about 80 miles. And so lots of agriculture, lots of small business and manufacturing, and lots of medical care at Rochester with the Mayo Clinic and our fine rural hospitals across the district. So the transportation needs are pretty substantive.

And as somebody who is on the Agriculture Committee, I can tell you that our farmers, for instance, they really need to not just produce our food and a lot of our energy needs, energy supplies, but they also need to get those things out, because most of them are consumed someplace else, sometimes far around the world.

So roads and bridges, the basics, that is what we are looking for in this bill. Roads and bridges, airports, deepwater ports, rail, pipelines, locks and dams—you name it. So I think I would start there.

Our district has a lot of diverse needs in transportation. And over on the Mississippi River, in Houston and Winona Counties, I think we have six locks and dams. And from what I understand, it costs upwards of maybe \$80 million to keep those up to date. And some of them are 80, 100 years old. So I would say that, if the committee can kind of focus on that type of thing, that would be very important, because when we need to get our grain and other products to market, if there is a problem transporting down the river, it is going to lead to all sorts of bottlenecks, it is going to be very inefficient, and it is going to hurt our especially rural communities in southern Minnesota.

And the roads and bridges, obviously, I think it has been too long since the committee and Congress has focused enough attention on our basic needs. I am a little concerned that there might be more money in a proposal out there for electric vehicles than there are for maintaining and upgrading our roads and bridges. That doesn't seem to make a lot of sense to me.

If you want to do some things to promote good policies in energy, you might want to look at promoting E15, which is an ethanol program in order to drive down emissions and still allow people with internal combustion engines to get a very, very good product, and to help our rural communities, as well, where a lot of that is produced.

You look at rail and pipelines and trucks, and they all kind of come together when you think about the Keystone pipeline. I am not sure I understand how an administration that claims they want to do infrastructure, the first thing that they did is they canceled the Keystone pipeline. And as farmers and others can tell you, when you have to drive or move crude oil on trucks and rail, all of a sudden, when farmers and others need to get their crops and their products to market, there aren't going to be enough cars on the railroads, and there aren't going to be enough trucks available in order to do that in an efficient way.

Pipelines are so much more—not just efficient, but safe. And it just—to me, I think that was a really bad idea, and I hope that can be revisited, and we can get the Keystone pipeline back up and running, along with all the other energy construction infrastructure projects out there, distribution points, refineries, and the pipelines across the board.

And then, in Minnesota and southern Minnesota we have some real basic needs in cities like Rochester. Rochester happens to be the home of the Mayo Clinic. I am one of their patients. They do

fantastic work, the folks there, and people from all around the world travel to Rochester, Minnesota, a town of about 115,000 people. They spend sometimes long periods of time there, getting treatments and other things, as the doctors do their best to preserve life and let people live their best lives possible. And so the downtown is getting congested.

There is a project that they are working on there. It is something that we may be talking with the committee down the road that we would like to propose, but that would be just one example of how we can help that city and alleviate some of the downtown congestion, and help people that travel, and improve the commerce and the economy.

You look at the regional airports in our district. Again, Rochester is another example, because they need to improve their runways and their lighting system to make sure that at all times and all weather conditions they can get tissue samples, they can get transplant organs and other things in there to make sure that people, again, can have life preserved. And that has to happen—you know, it can't happen tomorrow or the next day. It has to happen immediately. So those types of upgrades are very important.

Over on the other side of the district, in Mankato, we have the busiest airport in Minnesota without a control tower. So one of the things we are looking at is, can we build a physical tower, could we do a digital tower? Those are the types of projects that we are looking at, and we might be working with the committee down the road.

The city of Jackson, another one, needs a new runway. The city of New Ulm, the cross runway, that needs improvement.

So those are the types of things that we are working on in the district. We are looking to maybe partner with the committee as things move forward. And we are very excited about the one project that was completed last year, the Highway 14 BUILD Grant that we received from the Department of Transportation. Now, with the State government, we are partnered up from Nicollet to New Ulm. We are going to have a four-lane highway. That is a big deal. We have had that project going from Rochester to New Ulm for over 50 years, and it is going to be completed here in the near future. So we are excited about that and everything else.

I appreciate the committee's time, and I look forward to working with you down the road. Thank you.

[Mr. Hagedorn's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jim Hagedorn, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Minnesota**

INTRODUCTION

- As a member of the House Agriculture Committee, I know firsthand that high-quality transportation infrastructure is a necessity for the daily operations of America's farmers, ranchers and producers
- In rural farming communities, functioning roads and bridges are essential to the successful transportation of goods to market during harvest season

T&I COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

- Highway bill that improves America's interstate transportation infrastructure should be top priority for committee
 - Bill should not be a multitrillion dollar catch all
 - The more expansive the bill becomes—testing the true definition of infrastructure—the more bipartisan agreement suffers
- It will be critical to ensure fair distribution between rural and urban areas
- Transportation bill needs to be about roads and bridges, not a vehicle for pushing socialist Green New Deal policies
- President Biden's plan does not make any investment in biofuels infrastructure, instead it provides \$174 billion in electric vehicle infrastructure
 - Nationwide E15 infrastructure coupled with investment in biofuels refineries will lead to lower emissions at a fraction of the cost
- Core programs include:
 - Roads, bridges, airports, rails, ports
- Need to invest taxpayers' money wisely
 - Unprecedented spending levels of the stimulus bill earlier this year and Democrats' current infrastructure proposal

REP. HAGEDORN'S PRIORITIES

- Southern Minnesota transportation priorities are the basics:
 - Roads and bridges
 - Locks and dams
 - To ensure locks and dams in Winona and Houston Counties are upgraded
 - Necessary for grain, and other goods, to travel up the Mississippi River
 - Rails, pipelines, and trucks
 - Pipelines, such as the Keystone XL Pipeline, are more efficient in moving crude oil
 - Revoking Keystone XL's permit forces crude oil to be transported via other methods which are:
 - Less safe
 - Less efficient
 - Less environmentally friendly
 - I would encourage Biden Administration to reconsider its ruling on Keystone XL, especially given the high wage union jobs the project creates
- Important southern Minnesota projects:
 - Alleviate traffic congestion in downtown Rochester
 - Key to the expansion of the Mayo Clinic and welcoming patients from far and wide to the world's highest quality medical institution
 - "Medical tourism"
 - Regional Airports
 - Upgrade lighting system and runways
 - Mayo clinic handles millions of tests, samples, transplant materials, life-saving medical technologies, etc.
 - Busy airports in Minnesota without control towers
 - Runway repaving, readjusting, and reconstruction
- Last Congress:
 - Worked in bipartisan fashion with Governor Walz, Minnesota Department of Transportation, the State Legislature, and the Trump Administration to procure federal grant money, paired with state funds, to expand the Highway 14 corridor across southern Minnesota from two to four lanes.
 - Project was 50 years in the making
 - Major safety improvement
 - Helps with economic vitality of the region
 - Southern MN cities will have easier access, safety, and economic development
 - Prime example of how bipartisan cooperation can achieve real results in the infrastructure space

CONCLUSION

- Thank you for your time today and I look forward to continued conversations, cooperation, and work toward a bipartisan agreement that will help repair roads, bridges, and other means of transportation for the safety and economic opportunity of the American people

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, sir, and it does sound like our districts have a lot in common when it comes to the needs—waterways, bridges that go over those waterways. And this committee has a pretty good track record in recent years of working to fix those things. So I think you will like what comes out of it.

Up next is the gentleman from Texas, Mr. Cloud.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MICHAEL CLOUD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mr. CLOUD. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to start off by just thanking you for having this hearing today. I really appreciate it.

Of course, the Texas economy is diverse. It is supported by agriculture, energy, petrochemicals, manufacturing, and more. And as you know, all of these industries require a robust transportation network to get products to market. No matter the product, individuals and families in Texas depend on the jobs and economic growth that transportation infrastructure supports, as well as the rest of the Nation.

On the topic of surface transportation priorities, one important project I wanted to discuss was I-69. This future interstate will stretch from the U.S.-Mexico border to the U.S.-Canadian border, spanning 2,500 miles, total. Instead of embarking on new construction, I-69 requires upgrades and extensions to existing highways. The completion of this interstate will allow more freight to be transported through the U.S. and to Mexico and Canada. Nearly half of the interstate will fall in my home State of Texas, and will run along the gulf coast, a major trading hub for the United States.

Several Texas seaports, including the Ports of Corpus Christi and Houston, will undergo deepening and widening projects over the course of the next several years. This, along with other factors, will contribute to Texas' highway freight tonnage, doubling it by 2045. With increased freight comes increased trucks and more traffic congestion. The completion of I-69 can help reduce the amount of traffic congestion, because it would expand the number of lanes that are on existing roads. Therefore, I am requesting that the committee consider allowing future interstates to be eligible for National Highway Freight funding.

While Texas has included projects related to I-69 in its freight mobility plan, National Highway Freight Program funding cannot be allocated to I-69. In the past I have worked with Congressman Cuellar and other members of the Texas delegation to make future interstates included in State freight plans eligible for National Highway Freight funding. This change can give Texas DOT and other State transportation departments an extra pool of money to use for the construction of future interstates.

Another priority of mine is to revise MAP-21's requirements on designating roads as part of the interstate system. Roads that have been upgraded to interstate standards can only be designated as an interstate when a State's transportation department commits to connecting the road to an existing interstate within 25 years. And while this seems like an easy commitment, it can be hard for States to make this commitment when they are juggling other projects, specifically without the aforementioned funding.

Local communities seeking to attract business investments to the region want to be able to place interstate signs along roads that have been upgraded to interstate standards already. As a result, I am committed to working with the committee on a solution that can allow these communities to place signs on upgraded segments of road. The solution will be either adjusting the law to give TxDOT and other States more time to commit to connecting non-contiguous segments of interstate or removing the commitment requirement altogether.

Ultimately, I-69 will be a critical freight corridor for trade, and I look forward to working with the committee in the upcoming months on ways to help finance and expedite the completion of this interstate. Thank you very much.

[Mr. Cloud's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Michael Cloud, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Texas**

I want to start by thanking you all for the opportunity to speak here today.

Texas' economy is diverse, as it is supported by agriculture, energy, petrochemicals, and manufacturing.

All these industries require a robust transportation network to get products to market.

No matter the product, individuals and families in Texas depend on the jobs and economic growth that transportation infrastructure supports.

On the topic of surface transportation priorities, one important project I want to discuss is I-69.

This Future Interstate will stretch from the U.S.-Mexico border to the U.S.-Canada border, spanning 2,500 miles total.

Instead of embarking on new construction, I-69 requires upgrades and extensions to existing highways.

The completion of this Interstate will allow more freight to be transported throughout the U.S. and to Mexico and Canada.

Nearly half of the Interstate will fall in my home state of Texas and will run along the Gulf Coast—a major trading hub for the United States.

I know that several of Texas' seaports—including the Ports of Corpus Christi and Houston—will undergo deepening and widening projects over the course of the next several years.

This, along with other factors, will contribute to Texas' highway freight tonnage doubling by 2045.

With increased freight comes increased trucks and more traffic congestion.

The completion of I-69 can help reduce the amount of traffic congestion because it would expand the number of lanes that are on existing roads.

Therefore, my first request is that the committee consider allowing Future Interstates to be eligible for National Highway Freight funding.

While Texas has included projects related to I-69 in its Freight Mobility Plan, National Highway Freight Program funding cannot be allocated to I-69.

In the past, I have worked with Congressman Cuellar and other Members of the Texas Delegation to make Future Interstates included in state freight plans eligible for National Highway Freight funding.

This change can give TxDOT and other state transportation departments an extra pool of money to use for the construction of Future Interstates.

Another priority of mine is to revise MAP-21's requirements on designating roads as part of the Interstate system.

Roads that have been upgraded to Interstate standards can only be designated as an Interstate when a state transportation department commits to connecting the road to an existing Interstate within 25 years.

While this seems like an easy commitment, it can be hard for states to make this commitment when they are juggling other projects.

Local communities seeking to attract business investment to their region want to be able to place Interstate signs on roads that have been upgraded to Interstate standards.

As a result, I am committed to working with the committee on a solution that can allow these communities to place signs on upgraded segments of road.

The solution will be either adjusting the law to give TxDOT more time to commit to connecting non-contiguous segments of an Interstate or removing the commitment requirement altogether.

Ultimately, I-69 will be a critical freight corridor for trade.

I look forward to working with the committee in the upcoming months on ways to help finance and expedite the completion of this Interstate.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Mr. Cloud.

And just for a rundown of who is coming up next, we have Mr. Keller, Mrs. Fletcher, Ms. Bass, Mr. Gottheimer, Mr. Quigley, Ms. Foxx, and Mrs. Kim following them.

So with that I yield to my colleague from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Mr. Keller.

[Pause.]

Mr. LAMB. Mr. Keller, we can't hear you. I think you might be on mute.

[Pause.]

Mr. LAMB. Still nothing.

[Pause.]

Mr. LAMB. Still nothing. Maybe we could have—it looks like Mr. Gottheimer is on.

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. I am here.

VOICE. Yes, let's go to Mr. Gottheimer next.

Mr. LAMB. OK, we will go to Mr. Gottheimer, and then try to come back to Mr. Keller, while the staff works on it.

Go ahead, Mr. Gottheimer.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JOSH GOTTHEIMER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Mr. GOTTHEIMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Graves and the committee. Thank you for inviting me to discuss one of the most important issues in my district, the quality of our transportation infrastructure.

We desperately need—if I can begin talking about the Gateway project, because it is critical to fix and replace the tunnels underneath the Hudson River that connect New Jersey with New York City. They connect 20 percent of our GDP. The regional economy depends on the 200,000 people moving through the tunnels daily. If they don't run, or even if one tube is shut down, the American economy would lose \$100 million a day. These 110-year-old tunnels are literally crumbling. Amtrak has said that one of the tunnels would likely have to be shut down within 5 years.

The good news is the administration has already made progress on moving Gateway forward, with an environmental review to be done by May 28. But we still need to invest in the actual construction, to which New Jersey has already committed significant resources. And I ask the committee, in the upcoming surface reauthorization, to work with New Jersey and New York, including Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee Chairman Payne, to create investment streams for a transformative project like Gateway.

I would also like to discuss schoolbus safety. Unfortunately, and very sadly, we have lost schoolteachers and students in my district from preventable schoolbus crashes.

Last Congress the committee included one of my two bipartisan schoolbus safety bills in H.R. 2. The committee included my bipartisan SECURES Act, which requires seatbelts on all schoolbuses, and makes three-point lap-and-shoulder seatbelts the national standard. New Jersey already implemented life-saving changes on buses, including three-point seatbelts and better driver background checks. Now it is time for every child nationwide to be protected on their way to school.

My second bill, Miranda's Law, is named after Miranda Vargas, who, very sadly, was killed in a bus crash in my district. It will ensure that schools see red flags from dangerous bus drivers in real time to help remove dangerous schoolbus drivers from the road. I ask the committee to include both bills in the surface reauthorization bill.

New York also—turning to another topic—just got the green light to take the next step forward on congestion pricing. This “Manhattan moocher” congestion tax would charge drivers coming from New Jersey across the GW Bridge, where they already pay a \$16 toll, a new \$14 tax from driving into Midtown. That is a new annual tax on New Jersey drivers of \$3,000 in addition to the \$4,000 they already pay a year to cross the bridge. It is a sick joke to do this to families in the middle of a pandemic.

We all know that northern New Jersey has a very limited public transportation system. So many people have to drive, including nurses working late shifts to help during COVID. The extra money for the MTA is on top of the \$14 billion that we have already given to New York City from the COVID relief packages, and already the \$1.5 billion they get every year from the Federal Government. New Jersey commuters shouldn't be responsible for bailing out the MTA, especially when Congress has already provided substantial relief. This is New York mooching off New Jersey to solve their own problems.

My colleague, Bill Pascrell, and I have requested that Secretary Buttigieg and the U.S. DOT do the right thing. Let's all sit down and have a cooperative discussion about maintaining affordable commuting options and finding a better path forward that doesn't stick it to New Jersey drivers for New York's benefit. Adding a tax on New Jersey commuters who already pay a fortune is no way to make our region stronger.

Lastly, we can't afford 4 more years of crumbling bridges, roads, and tunnels. I am confident that, working in a bipartisan way, we will get a great infrastructure bill done. However, a disastrous cap of \$10,000 that gutted the State and local tax deduction was passed in the 2017 tax hike bill. And because of this, middle-class New Jersey families have been crushed, and residents have been leaving for other States. In fact, United Van Lines actually listed New Jersey as the number-one out-migration State, largely because of taxes, and largely because of SALT. It has affected middle- and lower class residents in high-cost-of-living States like mine, who are left to make up the difference when residents leave.

So we are sick and tired of picking up the tab for “moocher” States, other States that have gotten a free ride on our back, and then wanted to stick us with a larger bill after they gutted SALT. It is time we reinstate SALT, and actually give people in my State

a real tax cut for middle-class families. It is key. It is key, not just to helping our families get through this crisis, but also to making sure that we can help with programs that help so many of our other families.

As we develop a bipartisan infrastructure package, any changes to the tax code that affects families, I have one point of view: no SALT, no dice.

Thank you again for having me here today, Mr. Chairman, to discuss North Jersey's infrastructure needs that must be addressed. And thank you for the committee's leadership on these critical issues. I yield back.

[Mr. Gottheimer's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Josh Gottheimer, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Jersey

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to discuss one of the most important issues to the Fifth District of New Jersey: the quality of our transportation infrastructure, especially the Gateway Project, school bus safety, congestion taxes, and the SALT deduction.

GATEWAY PROJECT

We desperately need the Gateway Project to move forward to replace the tunnels underneath the Hudson River that connect New Jersey with New York City.

The tunnels connect 20% of America's GDP, and the regional economy depends on 200,000 people moving every day through these tunnels. If the tunnels don't run, estimates are that America would lose \$100 million every day.

These 110-year old tunnels are literally crumbling and their condition was made worse from the severe damage during Hurricane Sandy. Amtrak has said that one of the tunnels would likely have to be shut down within 5 years. This Administration has already made progress on moving Gateway forward, with the recent news that the environmental review will be done by May 28th. But we still need to invest in the actual construction, which will be billions of dollars.

I ask the Committee in the upcoming surface reauthorization to work with the New Jersey and New York Congressional delegations, including Rail Subcommittee Chairman Payne, to create investment streams for large, transformative projects like Gateway, that can't be easily paid for through existing formula or discretionary grant projects.

We need these tunnels replaced ASAP, before they fail and wreak havoc on New Jersey and the nation.

SCHOOL BUS SAFETY

We also need to address school bus safety. Like many Members of Congress, I have sadly lost school teachers and students in preventable school bus crashes in my District. Last Congress, I was thrilled to be able to work with the Committee to include my two bipartisan school bus safety bills in H.R.2 and I ask the Committee to do so again.

My bipartisan SECURES Act requires seat belts on all school buses, makes three-point lap-and-shoulder seat belts the national standard, and encourages innovative measures to ensure students actually wear their seat belts while on school buses.

My second bill, Miranda's Law, named after Miranda Vargas, who was killed in a school bus crash in my district, will ensure that schools see red flags from dangerous bus drivers in real-time—to help remove dangerous school bus drivers from the road immediately.

CONGESTION PRICING

In Northern New Jersey, another major issue that could greatly harm our families is New York's proposed new congestion tax scheme—where drivers would be charged upwards of \$14 to enter their congestion pricing zone below 60th Street in midtown Manhattan. I call it the Manhattan Moocher Congestion Tax.

This is a \$3,000 dollars annual tax on every daily Jersey commuter—in addition to the nearly \$4,000 they already pay every year to cross the GWB. How will hard-working people afford that? And in my part of northern New Jersey, there are very limited public transit options.

When we work together, New Jersey and New York are a tough combination to beat. New York can easily pull back on this proposal and work with us toward a better solution for all. So I ask the Committee to help me, Representative Bill Pascrell, and other members of the New Jersey & New York City Delegation to sit down, and figure out a better solution that meets the region's transit needs while uniting the two states, not dividing them.

SALT

Lastly, we need to find a bipartisan path forward for a robust infrastructure investment package. To make that possible, some are considering altering the tax code to find ways to make those investments.

As these negotiations begin, I've been clear that, if there are alterations made to the tax code for our families in New Jersey's Fifth District: no SALT, no dice.

We absolutely need to reinstate our State and Local Tax deduction, which was disastrously capped in the 2017 Tax Hike Bill, driving up taxes for families in every county in my District and driving families out of New Jersey. Removing the SALT cap has broad bipartisan support. The House has already passed the SALT cap repeal three times, including as part of two previous COVID-19 relief packages in May and October of last year.

As Congress puts together an infrastructure package to pay for this legislation, any tax changes that affect our families must reinstate the SALT deduction.

Thank you for this Committee's leadership and for having me here today to discuss North Jersey's infrastructure needs that must be addressed.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you. And we will try Mr. Keller again to see if the technical issues have been resolved.

Go ahead, sir.

Mr. KELLER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me now?

Mr. LAMB. Yes.

Mr. KELLER. I appreciate that.

TESTIMONY OF HON. FRED KELLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA

Mr. KELLER. Again, thank you. I appreciate you having this hearing so that we can go over some of the priority transportation projects to be considered as part of the upcoming Surface Transportation Reauthorization Act.

Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District includes 15 counties, each facing its own unique infrastructure challenges. I would like to touch on a few priorities that are important to the people of PA-12.

First is a project in Woodward Township near Lock Haven State Route 1001 on Farrandsville Road. The goal is to construct a retaining wall with a sidewalk from the Jay Street Bridge to the lower portion of the Woodward Township Park area. The area has been unsafe for quite some time and is in desperate need of attention. A guide rail protecting vehicles from a steep drop to the river on one side, and a steep rock face on the other presents unnecessary dangers for pedestrians and traffic coming through the area on their way to the Susquehanna River, sports fields, and recreational facilities. The proposed project will widen State Route 1001, realign and improve intersection sight lines, upgrade pavement conditions, and add a 4-foot shoulder on each side.

Another priority is the central Susquehanna Valley Throughway project in Snyder County, which is one of the largest transportation

projects in Pennsylvania. This ongoing project needs strong Federal investment for earthwork and continued construction in the Shamokin Dam Borough to just north of Kratzersville Road in Winfield, Union County. This investment would improve traffic conditions and spur economic activity in the Susquehanna Valley, completing a north-south corridor, a four-lane highway through the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. So very, very much needed for commerce, not just in Pennsylvania, but also New York State.

I would also like to express my support for a highway reconstruction project on Atherton Street in State College Borough, Patton and Harris Townships, in Centre County. The project in question would improve the drainage system and existing pavement. It will also include minor widening, traffic signal work, and the installation of CCTV cameras to aid in integrated corridor management.

Additionally, a project that runs through Loyalsock and Eldred Townships along Warrensville Road has needed attention for some time. The embankment failed in 2019 and has since been shut down due to safety concerns. Since that time, residents have had to travel along a 10-mile detour around this closure. Funding for this project would go a long way toward improving safety and reducing the flood risk in the community.

Also of note are several projects in Lycoming and Clinton Counties that will upgrade the bus and service vehicle fleet, and install covering to protect these vehicles and extend their useful life, thereby allowing these areas to make the most out of this public investment.

Finally, I would add that the value of BUILD or RAISE Grants cannot be overstated for the communities of PA-12. Since 2009, the program has aided 678 projects in all 50 States. The program enables communities to leverage funding to make meaningful investments in their local infrastructure, leading to greater economic development, which is especially important for the rural areas like those I am very proud to represent.

Making sure that much-needed infrastructure projects are able to get this assistance that is needed is a strong bipartisan objective. I hope this committee and the Department of Transportation will continue to lend support to this important program.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[Mr. Keller's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Fred Keller, a Representative in Congress
from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I appreciate you holding this hearing to go over some of the priority transportation projects to be considered as part of the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization act. Pennsylvania's 12th Congressional District includes 15 counties, each facing its own unique infrastructure challenges. I would like to touch on a few priorities that are important to the people of PA-12.

First is a project in Woodward Township near Lock Haven on State Route 1001 on Farrandsville Road. The goal is to construct a retaining wall with sidewalk from the Jay Street Bridge to the lower portion of the Woodward Township Park area. The area has been unsafe for quite some time and is in desperate need of attention. A guide rail protecting vehicles from a steep drop to the river on one side and a steep rock face on the other presents unnecessary dangers for pedestrians and traffic coming through the area on their way to the Susquehanna River, sports fields, and recreational facilities. The proposed project will widen State Route 1001, realign

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I hope this committee and the Department of Transportation will continue to lend support to this important program.

Thank you and I yield back.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, sir.

And with that we turn to the gentlelady from the great State of Texas, Mrs. Fletcher.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. LIZZIE FLETCHER, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Mrs. FLETCHER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today about the needs and priorities for infrastructure investment in Houston and Harris County, Texas.

Of course, like people across the country, we have many needs and many opportunities for investment, and I look forward to working with the committee to identify and develop transit and transportation infrastructure in the third fastest growing, and already the third largest county in the country, as well as other investments that will help make our infrastructure more resilient, including our power grid and our water conveyance infrastructure, and to make our entire coastal region more resilient, which is where I want to focus my testimony today.

As we discuss the American Jobs Plan, building on the important work of this committee, the President has told us that this is the moment to reimagine and rebuild, and to invest in the future of our country, in part, by investing in infrastructure that will be resilient to floods, storms, and other threats, and not fragile in the face of these increasing risks.

Back home in Texas, we have been doing just that for nearly a decade: imagining, designing, and working to address the challenges of the past with an eye to the future. And the time to do

that is now. That is why our plan for a transformative infrastructure should include the proposed Texas Coastal Spine, also known to us in Houston as the Ike Dike.

While hurricanes are a fact of life along the gulf coast, in a little more than a decade our region has sustained increasingly dangerous and destructive hurricanes, causing loss of life, destruction of property, and hundreds of billions of dollars in damages. Hurricane Ike in 2008, from which this project takes its nickname, became the third costliest storm in U.S. history, causing \$30 billion in losses to the Houston region, and killing 84 people. In 2015 and 2016, back-to-back 500-year floods flooded more than 12,000 structures. In the following year, another 500-year flood named Hurricane Harvey killed 68 people and caused more than \$125 billion in damages in the region.

The scientists have told us that these storms will increase in size and frequency as a result of climate change. And we believe them. We have seen it with our own eyes. But we also know that, as bad as these storms were, it could have been worse. It could have been what the Houston Chronicle has described as a 20-foot wall of water smashing into tanks filled with oil and chemicals, transforming a bay teeming with life into a pit of poison.

So what I am talking about now, what Texans have been talking about for a decade, is a plan to prevent a potential human and environmental catastrophe unlike any this country has ever seen. And that is because of the unique conditions that make this transformative plan to extend Galveston Island's existing seawall and constructing massive floodgates at the entrance to Galveston Bay, making this project a national priority.

This investment is in our national economic interest. The Houston region, home to more than 7 million people, is also home to the Port of Houston, the busiest port in the country by total tonnage, and home to one of the largest, if not the largest, concentration of refining and petrochemical complexes in the world. Essential products like gasoline, jet fuel, plastics, fertilizers, and cleaning chemicals are all made here. The economic damage to the United States in the event of a catastrophic impact storm surge up the channel would have dire economic consequences across the country.

Likewise, this investment is in our national security interest. The Texas gulf coast is responsible for 32 percent of the refining capacity for the entire country. And estimates are that around 40 percent of our Nation's jet fuel that we rely on for our national security is refined there. The consequences for loss of that capacity, for those as well as other fuels, cannot be understated as it relates to our national security.

This investment is timely. We have seen broad community support to take transformative action from across our community. Texas State legislators, led by Representative Gene Wu, have asked the White House to include this project in the infrastructure package. We should, hopefully, see a final Chief's Report from the Army Corps of Engineers this year on the study.

And this investment is smart. Studies have shown that, for every dollar spent on predisaster mitigation, the Federal Government saves \$7 or more in future damages. In light of the cost I mentioned for our recent storms, the return on this investment is plain.

This is the moment to do this. I will end my testimony with the few seconds I have left with the observation that was made in my very first hearing as a member of this committee in the 116th Congress. There are costs to doing nothing. And the cost of the potential human and environmental disaster of a storm surge along the Texas gulf coast and up the Houston Ship Channel are too great to bear.

I conclude with thanks to you for providing the opportunity to testify, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[Mrs. Fletcher's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Lizzie Fletcher, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Texas**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for the opportunity to testify today about the needs and priorities for infrastructure investment in Houston and Harris County, Texas.

Of course, like people across the country, we have many needs and many opportunities for investment, and I look forward to working with the Committee to identify and develop transit and transportation infrastructure in the third-fastest growing—and already the third largest—county in the country, as well as other investments that will help make our infrastructure more resilient, including our power grid and our water conveyance infrastructure, and to make our entire coastal region more resilient—which is where I will focus my testimony today.

As we discuss the American Jobs Plan, building on the important work of this committee, the President has told us “this is the moment to reimagine and rebuild” and to invest in the future of our country, in part, by *investing in infrastructure* that will be resilient to floods, storms, and other threats, and not fragile in the face of these increasing risks.

Back home in Texas, we have been doing just that for nearly a decade—imagining, designing, and working to address the challenges of the past with an eye to the future. *And the time to do that is now.*

That is why our plan for transformative infrastructure should include the proposed Texas Coastal Spine, also known to us as the “Ike Dike.”

While Hurricanes are a fact of life along the Gulf Coast, in a little more than a decade, our region has sustained increasingly dangerous and destructive Hurricanes—causing loss of life, destruction of property, and *hundreds of billions of dollars* in damages.

- Hurricane Ike in 2008, from which this project takes its nickname, became *the third-costliest storm in U.S. history*, causing \$30 billion in losses to the Houston region and killing 84 people.
- In 2015 and 2016, back-to-back “500 year” floods, the Memorial Day floods flooded more than 6,000 structures.
- The following year, another “500 year” flood named Hurricane Harvey killed 68 people and caused *more than \$125 billion in damages in the region.*

The scientists have told us that these storms will increase in size and frequency as a result of climate change—and we believe them.

We have seen it with our own eyes.

But we also know that, as bad as all these storms were, it could have been worse.

It could have been what the Houston Chronicle has described as a “20-foot wall of water smashing into tanks filled with oil and chemicals, transforming a bay teeming with life into a pit of poison.”

So, what I am talking about now, what Texans have been talking about for a decade, is *a plan to prevent a potential a human and environmental catastrophe unlike any this country has ever seen.*

That is because of the unique conditions that make this transformative plan to extend Galveston Island's existing seawall and construct massive floodgates at the entrance to Galveston Bay project a national priority.

This investment is in our national economic interest.

The Houston region, home to more than seven million people, is also home to the Port of Houston, the busiest port in the country by total tonnage, and home to one of the largest, if not the largest, concentration of refining and petrochemical complexes in *the world*. Essential products like gasoline, jet fuel, plastics, fertilizers, cleaning chemicals are all made here.

The economic damage to the United States in the event of a catastrophic impact storm surge up the ship channel would have dire economic consequences across the country.

We've seen a preview, when these facilities were closed for days as a result of Hurricane Harvey and this year's Winter Storm, we saw prices skyrocket across the country.

This investment is in our national security interest.

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We have seen broad community support to take transformative action from across the community. Texas state legislators, led by Representative Gene Wu, have asked the White House to include it in the infrastructure package. We should hopefully see a final chief's report from the Army Corps of Engineers this year on the study.

This investment is smart.

Studies have shown that for every dollar spent on pre-disaster mitigation, the Federal government saves seven dollars or more in future damages. In light of the costs I mentioned for our recent storms, the return on investment is plain.

This investment is also a major undertaking. Estimates place the cost of the project at \$26 billion, this project will require significant coordination between local entities and federal agencies. And we are ready to do it.

This is the moment to do it.

I will end my testimony with the observation made in my very first hearing as a member of this Committee in the 116th Congress, there are costs to doing nothing—and the costs of this potential human and environmental disaster of a storm surge along the Texas Gulf Coast and up the Houston Ship Channel are too great to bear.

And I also conclude with thanks to you for providing the opportunity to testify today. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, a valued former member of our committee, for your contributions and for how well you represent the people of the Houston area.

And with that we move to the gentleman from Illinois, Mr. Quigley.

[Pause.]

Mr. LAMB. Go ahead, Mike, when you are ready.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MIKE QUIGLEY, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. QUIGLEY. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman. I thank the ranking member and members of the committee for the opportunity to speak today.

As vice chairman of the Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies, I believe it is absolutely vital that THUD and T&I work together to ensure that America's infrastructure is a driver of economic growth and meets the needs of all our citizens. I think we all agree we have a lot of work to do to get to that point.

First, I would like to strongly endorse the President's vision for an infrastructure package that meets massive needs and levels of need in our country. I don't need to tell the members of this committee about the potential benefits of infrastructure investment. For decades we have dramatically underinvested in our national infrastructure. And I am grateful that this committee and this President understands the need to get back on track, and to ensure that we build the infrastructure we want, not the infrastructure we had.

To that end, I would like to recommend that the committee consider establishing a Federal Highway Administration Hazard Mitigation Program so that we can ensure that Federal money is spent on resilient projects that Americans can depend on, regardless of the challenges of climate change.

I would like to now focus in on a couple of often overlooked aspects of infrastructure that I believe are crucial in any bill this committee advances.

First, park districts. In Illinois, park districts are special units of local government that are home not just to outdoor recreation facilities, but the century-old buildings and other historic landmarks. In my city of Chicago, the South Shore Cultural Center is just one great example. In addition to more than 70 acres that include a golf course, beach, and open areas, the cultural center is a historic site that dates back to 1905. It was even the site of Barack and Michelle Obama's wedding reception in 1992. Because of their unique mix of outdoor spaces and historic structures, there is no Federal funding program that helps support the vital preservation work that park districts do.

I worked with my good friend and T&I Committee member, Chuy García, last summer to help craft a small, but important park district grant program for inclusion in H.R. 2. While the provision wasn't included in the bill then, we were grateful that this committee and the Natural Resources Committee agreed to work with us on this issue, going forward.

Likewise, I believe it is crucial for the Federal Government to support important cultural institutions like museums, zoos, and aquariums, both during and as we recover from COVID. These institutions located across the country and thousands of cities and towns represent our cultural heritage and are social, economic, and educational pillars of their communities. They have faced an unprecedented economic crisis, and they need and deserve our support. I will be sending a letter alongside Congressman García to this committee expanding on the need for support for museums, zoos, and aquariums in an infrastructure package. And I would like to work with the committee on this important issue.

Finally, I would like to speak about the Federal Bird Safe Buildings Act, which is before this committee. In fact, I have introduced a version of this bill in every Congress I have been a Member of, because I believe that we have a responsibility to be good stewards of the world we live in. Up to 1 billion birds die from colliding into buildings every year, which is a totally preventable problem. The cost-negligible bipartisan Bird Safe Buildings Act requires that public buildings constructed, acquired, or significantly altered by GSA incorporate bird-safe building materials and design features.

Birds have an intrinsic cultural and ecological value and help generate billions of dollars annually to the U.S. economy through wildlife-watching activities. For all these reasons, it is vital that we take the simple, straightforward, and low-cost steps in my bill to protect birds from fatal collisions.

This bill has been referred to Chairman Titus' subcommittee, and I thank her for her support of this in the past. I urge this committee to quickly consider and pass the Bird Safe Buildings Act, so that it can be brought to the floor for a vote in the full House.

Chairman, members of the committee, thank you for your time today. I look forward to working with you and the committee, going forward. And thank you for your good work for the infrastructure of our country, and I yield back.

[Mr. Quigley's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mike Quigley, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Illinois**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Members of the Committee, Thank you for the opportunity to testify before the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee about a number of priorities that are important to me and to my constituents.

As the Vice-Chairman of the Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee, I believe it is vital that THUD and T&I work together to ensure that America's infrastructure is a driver of economic growth and meets the needs of all our citizens.

And I think we'd all agree that we have a lot of work to do to get to that point.

First today, I'd like to strongly endorse President Biden's vision for an infrastructure package that meets massive level of need in our country.

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These institutions, located across the country in thousands of cities and towns, represent our cultural heritage and are social, economic, and educational pillars of their communities.

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For all these reasons, it's vital that we take the simple, straightforward, and low cost steps in my bill to protect birds from fatal collisions.

This bill has been referred to Chairwoman Titus' subcommittee and I thank her for her support of it in the past.

I urge the committee to quickly consider and pass the Bird Safe Buildings Act so that it can be brought the floor for a vote in the full House.

Chairman DeFazio, members of the Committee, thank you for your time today. I look forward to working with the committee going forward and thank you for your good work for the infrastructure of our country.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, sir.

And next, I believe, we have the gentlelady from North Carolina, Ms. Foxx.

Ms. FOXX. I am on. Can you hear me, Conor?

Mr. LAMB. We can hear you great.

Ms. FOXX. OK. We got a little problem here. We are trying to do two—we were on another call, since you all were running so late. We have to——

VOICE. There we go, you are good.

Ms. FOXX. OK.

VOICE. We are in committee now.

Ms. FOXX. Now I am on. Can you hear me?

Mr. LAMB. Yes, loud and clear.

Ms. FOXX. Thank you, I am sorry. Today's schedule is a little crazy.

TESTIMONY OF HON. VIRGINIA FOXX, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Ms. FOXX. I come before the committee today in support of designating U.S. 74 from Columbus, North Carolina, to Kings Mountain, North Carolina, as a future interstate, and to advocate for codifying this designation in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill.

The North Carolina U.S. 74 corridor passes through largely rural regions of the State, and is characterized by inconsistent travel speeds, bottlenecks at signaled intersections, and a high occurrence of vehicle accidents as the corridor moves through regional centers. The highway is also a crucial evacuation route for the southeast of the State in times of severe weather events. And you all hear about that a lot, I am sure.

U.S. 74 provides a direct route between several interstates and is a vital freight corridor. But previous studies have identified the need to upgrade the highway to an interstate status in order to move the freight more efficiently, and to allow for better access to the western and southern parts of the State.

In this district, U.S. 74 cuts through Cleveland, Gaston, and Rutherford Counties. While each of those counties would benefit from the proposed designation, for Rutherford County the designation is critical to the county's economic sustainability. The county is home to more than 66,000 people and sits in the foothills of the

Blue Ridge Mountains, about an hour west of Charlotte. Textile manufacturing once was an economic driver for the communities of Rutherford County, but the county has been economically challenged since thousands of textile and furniture manufacturing jobs were outsourced in the early 1990s.

In the time since, the county has made strides to redefine itself, and has diversified its industrial base into sectors such as automotive suppliers, data centers, and advanced materials. The county has worked to make improvements to its schools and has partnered with a nonprofit internet provider to expand broadband networks in its rural communities. Despite these efforts to attract private investments and diversify industries, Rutherford County is defined by the North Carolina Department of Commerce as an economically distressed tier 1 county and by the Appalachian Regional Commission as an economically at-risk county.

One of the major challenges facing Rutherford County in attracting outside investment is the fact that there are no interstates that run through it. That makes it difficult to attract investments from industry, who often want to be located near an interstate highway. Designating U.S. 74 as a future interstate from Columbus to Kings Mountain would have short-term as well as long-term positive impacts for Rutherford County and its neighboring counties.

While future interstate status gives no increased priority for projects or additional funding for the route, it does allow for the State to install future interstate signs immediately, which will help attract potential employers to the areas around U.S. 74. That is why support for the project has been expressed by the communities within Rutherford County, as well as from neighboring Polk and Cleveland Counties.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the committee today and ask for your support for including this future interstate designation in the upcoming surface reauthorization bill.

And I yield the balance of my time.

[Ms. Foxx's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Virginia Foxx, a Representative in Congress
from the State of North Carolina**

Thank you, I come before the committee today in support of designating US-74 from Columbus, North Carolina to Kings Mountain, North Carolina as a future interstate and to advocate for codifying this designation in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill.

North Carolina's US-74 corridor passes through largely rural regions of the state and is characterized by inconsistent travel speeds, bottlenecks at signaled intersections, and a high occurrence of vehicle accidents as the corridor moves through regional centers. The highway is also a crucial evacuation route for the southeast of the state in times of severe weather events.

US-74 provides a direct route between several interstates and is a vital freight corridor, but previous studies have identified the need to upgrade the highway to an interstate status in order to move freight more efficiently and to allow for better access to the western and southern parts of the state.

In my district, US-74 cuts through Cleveland, Gaston and Rutherford Counties. While each of those counties would benefit from the proposed designation, for Rutherford County the designation is critical to the county's economic sustainability.

The county is home to more than 66,000 people and sits in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, about an hour west of Charlotte. Textile manufacturing once was an economic driver for the communities of Rutherford County, but the county

has been economically challenged since thousands of textile and furniture manufacturing jobs were outsourced in the early 1990's.

In the time since, the county has made strides to redefine itself and has diversified its industrial base into sectors such as automotive suppliers, data centers and advanced materials. The county has worked to make improvements to its schools and has partnered with a nonprofit internet provider to expand broadband networks in its rural communities. Despite these efforts to attract private investments and diversify industries, Rutherford County is defined by the North Carolina Department of Commerce as an economically distressed, Tier One county and by the Appalachian Regional Commission as an economically at-risk county.

One of the major challenges facing Rutherford County in attracting outside investment is the fact that there are no interstates that run through it. That makes it difficult to attract investments from industries that often want to be located near an interstate highway.

Designating US-74 as a future interstate from Columbus to Kings Mountain would have short term, as well as long term positive impacts for Rutherford County and its neighboring counties. While future Interstate status gives no increased priority for projects or additional funding for the route, it does allow for the state to install future interstate signs immediately, which will help attract potential employers to the areas around US-74. That is why support for the project has been expressed by the communities within Rutherford County, as well as from neighboring Polk and Cleveland counties.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before the committee today and ask for your support for including this future interstate designation in the upcoming surface reauthorization bill. Thank you and I yield the balance of my time.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you.

And next we have the gentlelady from California, Mrs. Young Kim.

[Pause.]

Mrs. KIM. Thank you.

Mr. LAMB. Go ahead.

Mrs. KIM. Am I recognized now?

Mr. LAMB. Yes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. YOUNG KIM, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Mrs. KIM. Thank you. Thank you, Chairman and the T&I Committee, for convening this very important Members' Day to hear about our priorities this Congress. I am proud to speak on behalf of my constituents in the 39th Congressional District of California.

Now, more than ever, it is very important that any infrastructure legislation that is considered in this Congress has input from both sides of the aisle. Only together in a very bipartisan way can our country address some of the most pressing issues impacting the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure system.

By reforming our user-fee system and incentivizing public-private partnerships, we could find common ground to address the associated taxpayer cost of an infrastructure package without having to saddle our future generations with debt, or hamper our economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis with tax increases.

There is wide consensus from both parties that we must address the broad deficiencies of our ports, highways, bridges, and roads, but any infrastructure action by Congress must be targeted and effective in addressing our competitiveness abroad.

For example, in my district the growth in global trade and local socio-economic changes in southern California have caused California State Routes 57 and 60 to become two of the most heavily traveled freight highway corridors in the country. Unfortunately,

the American Transportation Research Institute has ranked the 57/60 confluence as the worst truck bottleneck in California, and one of the worst in the Nation.

The movement of goods from San Pedro Bay Ports to points beyond Los Angeles County and to the major interstates of I-10, I-15, and I-40 often involves a truck trip on the confluence. Nearly 40 percent of the Nation's containerized imports pass through the San Pedro Bay Ports. Of that, 9 percent of trucks passing through the 57/60 confluence originate from the San Pedro Bay Ports. And approximately 75 percent of these imports are destined for final consumption outside the region. Trucking delays originating at the confluence ripple across the State, causing economic disruptions on industries beyond the corridor.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of investing in our supply chains and logistics networks to efficiently provide food and medical supplies. Legislation and efforts to improve our freight highways will support export-import dependent industries and the creation of jobs throughout the United States.

I urge the committee to work with me to strengthen the national freight highway system to improve the movement of goods and people through the 57/60 confluence, which serves as a vital freight highway connection linking southern California ports and manufacturing facilities that drive the regional, State, and national economy.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify today, and for your leadership to improve our Nation's competitiveness and infrastructure. I look forward to working with this committee.

[Mrs. Kim's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Young Kim, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for convening this important Member Day to hear about our priorities this Congress.

Now more than ever, is very important that any infrastructure legislation that is considered this Congress has input from both sides of the aisle.

Only together—in a bipartisan way—can our country address some of the most pressing issues impacting the long-term sustainability of our infrastructure system.

By reforming our user fee system and incentivizing public-private partnerships, we could find common ground to address the associated taxpayer costs of an infrastructure package without having to saddle our future generations with debt or hamper our economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis with tax increases.

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Thank you again for allowing me to testify today and for your leadership to improve our nation's competitiveness and infrastructure.

I look forward to working with this Committee in the 117th Congress.

Mr. LAMB. Thank you, Mrs. Kim, for your testimony.

Next up we have—in this order, the next five Members will be: Ms. Bass of California; Ms. Adams of North Carolina; Mr. Sherman of California; Mr. Mann of Kansas; and Ms. Schrier of the State of Washington.

So with that we turn to the gentlelady from California, Ms. Karen Bass.

TESTIMONY OF HON. KAREN BASS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. BASS. Thank you very much. I want to thank Chair DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the House T&I Committee for the opportunity to testify before you today.

Our Nation's transportation system, we all know, is in desperate need of investment, and especially equitable investment that elevates different communities. For decades, access to Federal highway and transit funding has benefitted too few.

I would like to call your attention to the Build Local, Hire Local Act, which I introduced in the 116th Congress with Senator Gillibrand, and I plan to reintroduce this spring. Our bill emphasizes increased access to the DBE, or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, to create opportunities. Our bill also strengthens wage and labor standards, while increasing the robustness of environmental assessments for infrastructure projects because of climate change.

The Build Local, Hire Local Act is designed to create opportunities for all Americans—veterans, the disabled—so we reinvest in our Nation equitably. Our legislation even creates an apprenticeship pathway for workers in low-income communities to create vibrant, economically prosperous, and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods.

At its heart, the Build Local, Hire Local Act starts the long-term process of undoing decades of highway and construction projects that have bifurcated many communities.

Equally important, the legislation strengthens local hire policy. As you know, local hire is essential to providing good-paying transportation jobs. Without instituting local-hire policy, people cannot fully benefit directly from the Federal funds that flow to our district. So I was pleased to see in the American Jobs Plan that it supports local hire.

I urge the committee to support the reinstatement of the local-hire pilot program at the Department of Transportation. It was first instituted in 2015, and, essentially, what it is is that it removes an unnecessary regulation that, essentially, prohibits Federal funds on transportation projects from prioritizing people who live in the area of the project from being employed by the project.

Last Congress I was pleased to see H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which passed the House in July 2020, that includes a provision to redefine “small business” for the Department of Transportation’s DBE program so it matches the definition used by the SBA. It is a technical fix that, if enacted into law, will allow small businesses who are currently not eligible for the DBE program to qualify. I urge the committee to keep this provision in its entirety in the final infrastructure package this Congress to ensure minority- and women-owned businesses can fully benefit from the DBE program.

Finally, Chair and members of the committee, I would like to call your attention to an intractable issue affecting my district, as well as many other districts in the region and our Nation, and that is airplane noise. Constituents in my district and across the country who may live several miles away from an airport have found themselves bombarded by airplane noise from newly concentrated flightpaths. In this case, an arrival procedure into the Los Angeles International Airport.

The constituents suffer the adverse health effects of excessive noise, which includes increased incidence of sleep disruption, learning loss, hypertension, and heart disease, and also in the Los Angeles area, where the entertainment industry is key, a lot of businesses have been interrupted because it is very difficult to shoot, especially outside, if you have concentrated, consistent noise.

So right now, the COVID-19 pandemic has rattled the aviation industry with dramatic reductions in the number of flights. So this presents a unique opportunity to rethink aviation. As flights begin to ramp up again, we must seek solutions that bring relief to residents who live beneath these concentrated flightpaths. The FAA must give greater attention to airplane noise and address this important challenge.

I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member and members of the committee for the opportunity to testify. It has been an honor to speak to the needs of my constituents, and the policies that would elevate all of us in the country. Thank you very much.

[Ms. Bass’ prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Karen Bass, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Chair DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the House Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure, thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

Our nation’s transportation system is in desperate need of investment—and especially, equitable investment that elevates communities of color and minority- and women-owned businesses. For decades, access to federal highway and transit funding has benefited too few. Now, more than ever, on the tail end of a pandemic that has devastated communities but especially those of African-Americans and Latinos, who make up the heart of essential workers, we need to take bold action to equitably rebuild our nation’s infrastructure. That means prioritizing the concerns of communities long burdened by historically unjust transportation policy.

First, I'd like to call your attention to the "Build Local, Hire Local Act," which I introduced in the 116th Congress with Senator Gillibrand and plan to reintroduce this spring. Our bill emphasizes increased access to the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, which creates opportunities for businesses owned by minorities. Our bill also strengthens wage and labor standards, while increasing the robustness of environmental assessments for infrastructure projects because climate change is here and needs addressing.

The "Build Local, Hire Local Act," is designed to create opportunities for all Americans—veterans, the formerly incarcerated, and the disabled—so we reinvest in our nation equitably. Our legislation even creates an apprenticeship pathway for workers in low-income communities to create vibrant, economically prosperous, and environmentally sustainable neighborhoods. At its heart, the "Build Local, Hire Local Act" starts the long-term process of undoing decades of highway and construction planning that has bifurcated communities of color. It begins to break down unjust barriers to employment and access to clean air that have impacted so many African Americans and communities of color.

Equally important, the legislation strengthens local hire policy. As you know, local hire policy is essential to providing good-paying transportation jobs for people living in California's 37th Congress District in Los Angeles, which I have the honor of representing, where several transit and highway construction projects are ongoing. Without instituting local hire policy, Angelenos cannot fully benefit directly from the federal funds that flow to our District. What's more, African Americans and Latinos are disproportionately impacted from accessing quality jobs.

This is why I was pleased to see President Biden's "American Jobs Plan" support local hire policy.

It's clear Congressional and White House policy are aligned on this issue, which is why I also urge the committee to support the reinstatement of the Local Hire Pilot Program at the Department of Transportation (DOT), which was first instituted in 2015 and put on pause by the previous administration. The Local Hire Pilot Program is simple: it would permit recipients of federal highway and transit funds to hire locally. If reinstated, this would make a world of difference to Angelenos in the Congressional District, especially given how the pandemic has caused many businesses to suffer and shut down. Local hire policy will help uplift our District's long-term economic trajectory.

Last Congress, I was pleased to see H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which passed the House in July 2020, include a provision to redefine "small business" for the DOT's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) program so it matches the definition used by the Small Business Administration. That technical fix, if enacted into law, will allow small businesses currently not eligible for the DBE program to qualify. I urge the committee to keep this provision in its entirety in the final infrastructure package this Congress to ensure minority- and women-owned businesses can fully benefit from the DBE program.

Finally, Chair DeFazio and Members of the Committee, I'd like to call your attention to an intractable issue affecting the 37th Congressional District of California, as well as many other in the region and our nation—airplane noise.

Constituents in similar Congressional Districts, which are located near major international airports, in this case the Los Angeles International Airport, suffer from the adverse health effects of airplane noise. That includes sleep disruption, hypertension, and stress. As we know, Next Gen technology implemented by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) created an otherwise unseen degree of overhead flight concentration. My staff have worked tirelessly to pursue avenues that might disperse flights, mitigate low-flying aircraft, and reduce the number of nighttime airplanes.

Right now, the COVID-19 pandemic has rattled the aviation industry, and in so doing, the pandemic has presented a unique opportunity to rethink aviation. We should be mindful of instituting changes that will allow residents who live beneath flight paths to experience a greater sense of calm. At its core, the FAA must prioritize airplane noise. Then, too, we must ensure the FAA uses the most reliable and accurate metrics to measure noise and that aircrafts are installed with the latest technology to limit the noise of engines. Let's work together to develop new and innovative means to address this longstanding challenge and provide our constituents with some relief.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the House Committee for the opportunity to testify.

It has been an honor to speak to the needs of my constituents and the policies that would elevate Angelenos and communities of color. I appreciate your time.

Ms. DAVIDS [presiding]. Thank you, and the gentlewoman from North Carolina, Ms. Adams, is recognized for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ALMA S. ADAMS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

Ms. ADAMS. Thank you very much. Thank you to Chairman DeFazio, to Ranking Member Graves, and to the distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to be with you today. I am excited to share with you the priorities of North Carolina's 12th Congressional District, and what we will be able to accomplish with your help through your Member-designated projects.

Charlotte, the largest city in my district, has grown tremendously over the past decade. We are now the 15th largest city in the country. At the same time, our county, Mecklenburg, has over 1 million residents, and is one of the most populated in North Carolina. Unfortunately, our transportation infrastructure has not kept pace with our rapid growth.

And that is why our Charlotte Area Transit System, CATS, boldly invested to create our State and region's first light rail transit back in 2007. And with the support of then-Secretary of Transportation and former Charlotte mayor, Anthony Foxx, and my friend and colleague, THUD Appropriations Chairman David Price, CATS secured the Federal funding necessary to create our light rail system through the Capital Investment Grant program.

And prior to COVID-19, the LYNX Blue Line facilitated travel for almost 30,000 North Carolinians daily, 30,000. And we know that our light rail works, and that is why we are looking to fund this expansion. We want to connect our northern towns to uptown Charlotte, to the Charlotte Douglas Airport. And with your help, we will be able to connect our entire region to our mass transit system.

So as you work to draft a surface transportation reauthorization and infrastructure package, I want to strongly encourage you to increase the authorized funding for the Capital Investment Grant program.

I want to applaud you, Chairman DeFazio, for your work last Congress to dramatically increase the CIG program's authorized level of funding. I look forward to working with you in the weeks and the months ahead as this committee develops this necessary legislation.

And now I want to just take a moment to address some of the requests that my office has received for Member-designated projects.

In Cornelius, North Carolina, the Westmoreland interchange project will help facilitate the development of a new hospital that will anchor the region. In Huntersville, North Carolina—all still in my district—the downtown greenway project would help connect residents to a park and ride lot that will enable thousands to easily reach work in uptown and relaxation in downtown Huntersville. In Charlotte, Member-designated project funds will enable our local area transit system to purchase more electric buses, which will keep our air clean and our people moving. And it will also allow the city to install streetlights on our high-injury network to help prevent automobile accidents and save lives.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I want to thank you and the committee again for the opportunity to advocate for my constituents, for my city, and county. Down in North Carolina we like to say that Charlotte has got a lot, and I am hoping that, with your help, we can get just a little bit more. Thank you, and I am so very pleased to answer any questions that you may have. I yield back.

[Ms. Adams' prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Alma S. Adams, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina

Thank you Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and the distinguished members of this Committee for the opportunity to be with you today.

I'm excited to share with you the priorities of North Carolina's 12th District, and what we will be able to accomplish with your help through your Member Designated Projects.

Charlotte, the largest city in my district, has grown tremendously over the past decade. We are now the 15th largest city in the country.

At the same time, our county, Mecklenburg, has over one million residents and is one of the most populated in North Carolina.

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Prior to COVID-19, the LYNX Blue Line facilitated travel for almost 30,000 North Carolinians daily!

We know that our light rail works. That's why we're looking to fund its expansion: we want to connect our northern towns to Uptown Charlotte to airport.

And with your help, we'll be able to connect our entire region to our mass transit system.

So, as you work to draft a surface transportation reauthorization and infrastructure package, I strongly encourage you to increase the authorized funding for the Capital Investment Grant program.

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I look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead as this Committee develops this necessary legislation.

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In Cornelius, NC, the *Westmoreland Interchange project* will help facilitate the development of a new hospital that will anchor the region.

In Huntersville, NC, the *downtown greenway project* will help connect residents to a park and ride lot that will enable thousands to easily reach work in Uptown and relaxation in downtown Huntersville.

In Charlotte, member designated project funds will enable our local area transit system to purchase more electric buses, which will keep our air clean and our people moving.

And it will also allow the city to install streetlights on our high injury network to help prevent automobile accidents and save lives.

In closing, Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and the Committee again for the opportunity to advocate for my constituents and for my city and county.

Down in North Carolina, we like to say that "Charlotte's got a lot."

I'm hoping that with your help, we can get a little bit more.

Thank you and I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you. The gentlewoman yields back.

The Chair will now recognize Mr. Sherman of California for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. BRAD SHERMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. SHERMAN. Thank you. I want to join with Karen Bass—and, I am sure, others—in saying how important it is that the committee focus the FAA's attention on airport noise. It is a horrendous problem in my district, in Karen Bass' district, and so many others around the Los Angeles area.

I want to focus now on the need to build a subway through the Sepulveda Pass. The San Fernando Valley, "the Valley," is cut off from the rest of Los Angeles by the Santa Monica Mountains. And every day 400,000 commuters in 383,000 cars drive between the Valley and the West Side of Los Angeles on the 405 Freeway, as it runs for 9 miles through the Sepulveda Pass. This is the greatest geographic bottleneck in California. By comparison, the Golden Gate Bridge needs to accommodate only 112,000 cars per day, only one-third of the number that go through the Sepulveda Pass.

For these unfortunate motorists, what should be a 12-minute drive instead takes 45 minutes or longer. And that is on top of the other parts of their commute. The daily commuter spends an average of 56 hours sitting in traffic in the Sepulveda Pass every year. That is 56 hours a year, on top of the rest of their commute.

Already listed among the Nation's top 10 congested roadways, the Sepulveda Pass corridor serves a population that is expected to grow by 14 percent over the next two decades.

This project has substantial local support. The residents of Los Angeles County, already paying quite robust income and property taxes, went to the polls and raised the sales tax rate in our county up to 10¼ percent in order to pass Measure M, which provides over half the money needed for the \$10 billion project I am describing.

Metro, our transportation agency, estimates that this project will attract between 122,000 and 137,000 daily riders, based on the conditions we expect in 2042. By taking these would-be drivers out of their cars, this project will reduce our regional vehicle-miles traveled by over 1 million miles a year, and reduce vehicle-hours traveled by 72,000 hours per year.

In addition to the time and cost faced by the commuter, the Sepulveda Pass subway project offers an opportunity to improve local air quality in Los Angeles—the area that gave you the word "smog," it has been synonymous with difficulties in air quality for many decades—and it will reduce automobile emissions of CO₂ by 156 million pounds per year.

Now, in addition to asking the committee to support a subway through the Sepulveda Pass, I also support short-term efforts designed to ameliorate the problem on the freeway a bit. This includes a specific request being brought forward by the L.A. County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, and by improving the striping and other aspects of the 405, we will prevent this from getting as much worse as it would, otherwise. But ultimately, we need a subway.

Let me give you one other extraordinary reason to support this project. When this subway is built, I will retire from Congress. That may be the biggest incentive for some of you to support this project. Thank you.

[Mr. Sherman's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Brad Sherman, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

The reason the San Fernando Valley is so-called a "valley" is due to its famous separation from the westside of Los Angeles by the Santa Monica Mountain range.

And every day, over 400,000 commuters in some 383,500 cars make the drive between the Valley and the westside, by sharing a section of the 405 freeway as it runs for nine miles along a low-mountain pass known as the Sepulveda Corridor.¹

By comparison, the Golden Gate Bridge sees just 112,000 cars per day, less than a third of the cars in the Sepulveda Pass.²

For these unfortunate motorists, what should be a 12-minute drive during free-travel takes over 45 minutes at peak periods.³

The daily commuter spends an average 56 hours of their lives per year sitting in traffic in the Sepulveda Pass—that is 56 hours in addition to what their commute would take if there was no bottleneck.⁴

Already listed among the nation's top 10 most congested roadways (ninth),⁵ the Sepulveda Pass Corridor serves a population that is expected to grow by 14% over the next two decades.⁶

As this happens, commuters are growing desperate for a transit alternative through the Sepulveda Corridor.

Gratefully, through the passage of measure M, Los Angeles voters have approved the initial financing for the development and construction of a three-phase capital project culminating in subway line through the Sepulveda Pass.

Los Angeles Metro is currently working to develop a heavy-rail concept that aims to provide a Valley-to-Westside trip in just under 20 minutes.

Metro past ridership forecasts for the Sepulveda rail line have estimated that the project would attract between 122,000 and 137,000 daily riders based on 2042 conditions.

By taking these would-be-subway-riders out of their cars, the Sepulveda Pass Project is estimated to reduce regional vehicle miles traveled by up to 1,039,000 miles per year and vehicle hours traveled by up to 72,000 hours per year.⁷

In addition to the time and cost saved by the commuter, the Sepulveda Pass Project offers an important opportunity to improve local air quality and to reduce automobile emissions through an expected reduction of CO₂ by up to 156,000,000 pounds per year.⁸

The needed infrastructure will not be built overnight, and we cannot wait to immediately address the current congestions through the Sepulveda Pass. In addition to asking the Committee to support our efforts to establish a subway line, the Committee should also support efforts too increase the capacity of the 405 freeway. This includes a specific request being brought forward with the LA County Metropolitan Transportation Authority. We should convert the existing HOV lane into an Express Lane and possibly add a second Express Lane in each direction over the 10 miles between I-10 and US-101.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee will be looking at hundreds of projects as it continues its work. Alleviating congestion in the Sepulveda Pass is a priority for the residents of the San Fernando Valley, Southern California, and our national infrastructure. I look forward to working with the Chair on this critical infrastructure.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields back.

¹Source: <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/policyinformation/tables/02.cfm> Dept of Transportation, Federal Highway Data for 2019; Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Report, p. ES-6)

²Source: <https://www.goldengate.org/bridge/history-research/statistics-data/annual-vehicle-crossings-toll-revenues/>

³Source: I-405 Level 2 Traffic & Revenue Study Interstate 405 (Sepulveda Pass) ExpressLanes Intermediate (Level II) Traffic & Revenue Study <http://libraryarchives.metro.net/DPGTL/congestionpricing/2019-Metro-405-SepulvedaPass-ExpressLanes-Study.pdf> (p.27 Figure 3-12) INRIX Data for 2016.

⁴<https://inrix.com/press-releases/2019-traffic-scorecard-us/> INRIX Data for 2019.

⁵<https://inrix.com/press-releases/2019-traffic-scorecard-us/> INRIX Data for 2019.

⁶Source: Sepulveda Pass Transit Corridor Feasibility Report, Table 2-3

⁷Source: Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Report, p. 59

⁸Based on VMT in Sepulveda Transit Corridor Feasibility Report, p. 59

All right, next the Chair would like to recognize the gentleman from Kansas, Mr. Mann.

[Pause.]

Ms. DAVIDS. OK, Mr. Mann may be experiencing technical difficulties. We will go to the gentlewoman from Washington, Ms. Schrier.

You are recognized for 5 minutes.

[Pause.]

Dr. SCHRIER. Hi, this is Kim.

Ms. DAVIDS. You are recognized for 5 minutes.

Dr. SCHRIER. Had you called on me?

Ms. DAVIDS. Oh, Ms. Schrier, you are recognized for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. KIM SCHRIER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Dr. SCHRIER. Well, thank you very much. Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves for hosting this Members' Day today. I appreciate the opportunity to testify about my priorities and concerns as a representative from Washington's Eighth Congressional District.

And my district has it all: farms, crowded suburbs, mountain passes that close frequently, rural roads, interstates, freight rail, ferries, wind and hydropower, and more. And so I am submitting a longer letter to address all of these concerns, but I wanted to highlight just a few for you today.

First, in Washington State we are a leader in clean energy production, and have made investments in hydro, wind, and solar power, which are critical for broader electrification and meeting our future clean energy goals. And in particular, our State is a large producer of hydropower. Only 3 percent of dams, though, have actually produced hydropower in America, and we could double that production without building a single new dam.

In the next decade, close to 30 percent of U.S. hydropower projects are going to come up for relicensing, and I am interested in how to leverage this opportunity, building on the work already done in academia and advocacy and industry by focusing on the renewable energy and storage benefits of hydropower, and the environmental and economic benefits of healthy rivers.

This would include rehabilitating dams to improve safety and resiliency. It would include retrofitting powered dams, and adding power generation at nonpowered dams, while addressing fish passage, flood mitigation, and grid integration. And it would also include removing dams that don't provide sufficient benefits to justify their environmental impacts.

For trade, a separate issue, it is a priority to ensure that the rural areas in my district are well connected. The Wenatchee Valley in my district is a prime example. The valley and surrounding rural areas depend on an 11-mile Apple Capital Loop to carry more than 100,000 vehicles each day. The nearest interstate highway is 40 miles away, and travel is really constrained by mostly two-lane, rural roads and two bridges. Improvements in this loop are critical for trade, emergency services, and fire safety.

At the economic heart of my district is agriculture. Central Washington is home to some of the Nation's largest growers and

exporters, and farmers and growers face chronic challenges to get their products to market, including frequent road closures, port delays, and that distance from an interstate highway.

More acutely, farmers have shared with me how pandemic conditions, trade imbalances, port shortcomings, and international shipping practices at our ports are negatively impacting their industry, threatening export markets and also the relationships they developed over decades. Shipping has become really unpredictable, delayed, more expensive, and perilous, especially for perishable goods like the apples and cherries coming from my district. Ships are frequently returning to China empty, rather than with our exports. And so, along with improvements in shipping policies, our ports and shipping infrastructure require modernization to preserve our agricultural community.

Finally, I want to talk about safety. Chelan County is highly vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires. And during the last fire evacuation efforts, it became alarmingly evident to my constituents that that same Apple Capital Loop was insufficient for safe evacuation. It is another compelling reason for those improvements.

And finally, I would love to highlight climate action and environmental stewardship. Washington State has invested millions of dollars to address downstream barriers that block Chinook salmon from reaching their spawning grounds. And headwaters located in our national forests are critical to having salmon populations thrive downstream.

So in the coming weeks I am planning to reintroduce the Legacy Roads and Trails bill, which ensures dedicated funding to the U.S. Forest Service for projects that protect clean water and riparian habitat. This program focuses on urgently needed road decommissioning of unused or unsafe roads, the removal or replacement of culverts and other fish passage barriers, and the repair and maintenance of roads and trails.

And so thank you for your leadership, and for attending to the needs of my district. And I yield back the very minuscule balance of my time. Thank you.

[Dr. Schrier's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kim Schrier, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Washington**

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify about my priorities and concerns as representative of Washington state's 8th congressional district. I write to respectfully request consideration of the following priorities as you work to reauthorize surface transportation programs.

Washington state depends on many facets of infrastructure for its trade, resiliency, and economic success. Washington's 8th District, my district, depends on smooth, connected roads, reliable public transportation, and comprehensive freight rail to ensure agricultural goods can be transported, economies can grow, and communities can access the services they need. Four hundred of the "structurally deficient" bridges that are necessary for travel are in Washington state. From a labor perspective, there are more than 700,000 direct and indirect jobs that can be created in Washington State through a national infrastructure package. Economic recovery is only possible with continued federal investment in and support for the next generation of engineers, operators, technicians, mechanics, and other transportation workers.

There are several areas that I wish to touch on that are extremely important to my state and district:

- Hydropower and Washington State
- Keeping our rural areas connected physically and virtually;
- Improving our highways and interchanges;
- Getting our goods to port;
- Addressing congestion and safety concerns that impact my constituents; and
- Ensuring our infrastructure and our wildlife and salmon can co-exist.

HYDROPOWER AND WASHINGTON STATE

In Washington state, we are a leader in clean energy production and have made investments in hydro, wind, and solar power which are critical for broader electrification and meeting our clean energy goals.

Washington State is the top producer of hydroelectric power in the US. It accounts for approximately 25% of the country's annual hydroelectricity generation. Yet nationally, only three percent of dams actually produce hydropower, and we could double current energy production without building a single new dam. In the next decade, close to 30 percent of U.S. hydropower projects will come up for relicensing. I am interested in how to leverage this opportunity, building on the work already done in academia, advocacy, and the industry by focusing on the renewable energy and storage benefits of hydropower and the environmental and economic benefits of healthy rivers. This includes rehabilitating dams to improve safety and resiliency. It includes retrofitting powered dams and adding power generation at non-powered dams while addressing fish passage, flood mitigation, and grid integration. It also includes removing dams that do not provide sufficient benefits to society to justify their detrimental environmental impacts.

KEEPING OUR RURAL AREAS CONNECTED & IMPROVING OUR HIGHWAYS AND INTERCHANGES

Washington's rural areas need connected, reliable infrastructure. Wenatchee Valley in my district is a prime example: it is a hub at the crossroads of highways going east to Spokane, west to Seattle, north to British Columbia, and south to Yakima and the Tri-Cities. It is the heart of Washington, settled in a rural part of the state East of the Cascade Mountains. The nearest Interstate Highway is 40 miles away. The Valley and surrounding rural areas depend on their 11-mile Apple Capital loop to carry more than 100,000 vehicles each day. Freight, businesses, commuters, transit, emergency services, residents and visitors must travel on it.

Connectivity is vital for Washington's economy and trade. Washington's economy relies heavily upon the freight rail system to ensure movement of the state's agricultural, chemical, and natural resources and manufactured products to local, national, and international markets. Some small roads and railways are the only way that goods can make it from our agricultural centers to our ports. Stampede Pass is an example of a small rail that runs a long course in my district, cutting across Central Washington and Pierce and King Counties, ensuring that goods can traverse the mountain pass even when roads are shut down. Our state has committed to ensuring this railway can stay viable, investing in electrification for more efficient travel. Dedicated federal investments in projects like this will allow for more railways to be improved and built, and for economies to be more connected and flourish.

GETTING OUR GOODS TO PORT

The economic heart of my district is agriculture. Central Washington is home to some of the nation's largest growers and exporters, selling hay, apples, pears, potatoes and cherries around the world. Farmers and growers face chronic challenges to get their products to market, including frequent road closures, port delays, and distance from interstate highways.

More recently, farmers have shared with me how pandemic conditions, trade imbalances, port shortcomings, and international shipping practices are impacting their industry, threatening export markets and international relationships they have built over decades. Right now, because of profitability and trade imbalance, ships return to China with empty containers rather than wait for our agricultural goods. Our farmers and growers face great uncertainty and high prices to get their products overseas. This threatens to upend our nation's agricultural industry and agricultural markets abroad for years to come.

While I continue to work with the Federal Maritime Commission to find possible solutions to this global shipping crisis, I ask that you consider the importance of

maintaining and improving the domestic infrastructure—the roads, bridges, railways, rivers, and ports—that these farmers rely on.

ADDRESSING CONGESTION AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Chelan County is highly vulnerable to catastrophic wildfires. In fact, it gets the second highest risk rating in the country. During the last fire evacuation efforts, it became alarmingly evident to my constituents that the Apple Capital Loop mentioned previously was insufficient for safe evacuation. It is another compelling reason for those much-needed improvements.

Safety is also a consideration for our highways, as is the case in most of the country. I would highlight Interstate 90, the main east-west corridor that traverses our state and my district. It is critical for getting produce and hay to the port, but also a critical transportation route for daily commutes and travel. In addition to standard road repairs, widening and improving the interchange with SR18 will reduce dangerous traffic back-ups and resulting collisions, and cut transit time.

Similarly, updates to maintain the structural integrity of Vantage Bridge on I-90—the only interstate crossing of the Columbia River in the area for 75 miles—will allow for safe passage of both people and freight, particularly during emergencies such as wildfires. And, of course, improvements we make now need to be future-proofed, sustainable, and resilient in the face of a changing climate.

ENSURING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE AND OUR WILDLIFE AND SALMON CAN CO-EXIST

Representatives Kilmer, Larsen, and I have been working collectively to identify ways to protect endangered salmon and Southern Resident orca populations in various legislative vehicles within the committee's jurisdiction, including WRDA¹ and provisions associated with Legacy Roads and Trails within the Moving Forward Act of last year.²

In the coming weeks, I plan to reintroduce the Legacy Roads and Trails bill which ensures projects that protect clean water and reconnect fish habitat are prioritized. As we all know, when roads are not adequately maintained, culverts become clogged with debris, landslides occur, bridges weaken, and roads wash out. Large amounts of sediment can end up in mountain streams, suffocating fish and burying stream channels. This program focuses on urgently needed decommissioning of unused or unsafe roads in our national forests, removal or replacement of fish passage barriers, and road and trail repair and maintenance. The program's capacity for leveraging is among its strengths. In many cases, the Forest Service can successfully leverage Legacy Roads and Trails funding with a variety of private, local, state, and other federal funding sources, substantially stretching the reach of every dollar allocated to the program.

This program specifically compliments the work of our state to update and/or remove culverts to improve water quality and habitat for Chinook salmon, bull trout, and steelhead. These fish are an important part of Northwest culture and heritage and have suffered heavily. These efforts are critical, and we need to have sustained federal investment to make it a reality.

You have always been a champion for the Pacific Northwest and I sincerely thank you, and Ranking Member Graves, for your leadership and attention to these important issues. I look forward to partnering with you, your committee, and my colleagues from both sides of the aisle as this legislation develops. We need to build back better for our communities, for our economy, and for our climate. Thank you for your consideration.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, Rep. Schrier.

And next the Chair would like to recognize Congressman Mann from Kansas for 5 minutes.

[Pause.]

Ms. DAVIDS. OK, we will go ahead and recognize Mr. Jacobs from New York for 5 minutes.

¹ <https://schrier.house.gov/media/press-releases/schrier-and-larsen-introduce-bill-assist-salmon-and-steelhead-passage>

² <https://wildearthguardians.org/brave-new-wild/news/guardians-applauds-inclusion-of-legacy-roads-and-trails-remediation-program-in-moving-forward-act/>

**TESTIMONY OF HON. CHRIS JACOBS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. JACOBS. Good afternoon. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be here today and address the committee. I am Chris Jacobs from the 27th Congressional District.

As we move forward with the efforts to expand our Nation's infrastructure, I want to bring to your attention the important issue in my home State of New York. New York is currently the only State in the Union to still impose absolute liability on employers and property owners for gravity-related falls. This archaic standard is otherwise known as the Scaffold Law. Absolute liability under the Scaffold Law means that employers and property owners are fully liable for workplace accidents, regardless of the contributing fault of the worker.

Due to this strict liability statute, an employer is 100 percent liable if an employee, as an example, is harmed, even if that employee is very intoxicated. Contrast that with the liability standard of comparative negligence, the standard of every other State in the Nation, which allows for a reasonable determination of fault between the two parties.

Studies have indicated that the Scaffold Law adds approximately 8 to 10 percent to the cost of construction in New York State, in every single project in New York State, whether it is public or private, no matter what the size of the project.

Due in part to the extreme standard set by the Scaffold Law, the cost of construction in New York State, as a result, is higher than any other State in the Nation, resulting in unnecessary taxpayer spending across all levels of Government.

According to one study, the Scaffold Law is expected to add an additional \$180 to \$300 million to New York City's Gateway project. The Tappan Zee Bridge project, also known as Mayor Cuomo Bridge—a major project—was estimated to have incurred \$300 million in additional unnecessary cost, due to the Scaffold Law.

In a recent amicus brief, the New York State Transit Authority stated it is in an existential financial crisis. Its public liability burden in 2019 was \$150 million, much of that due to the Scaffold Law.

These costs represent hundreds of millions of dollars that could have gone towards improving our schools, repairing New York City's subway system, and fixing roads throughout New York State.

Defenders of the Scaffold Law say it improves worksite safety, but data shows the opposite. A study deemed practice-ready by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering concluded that the law actually increases both fatal and nonfatal injuries by 670 each year.

The challenges presented by the Scaffold Law are why I introduced the Infrastructure Expansion Act, H.R. 1300, which would exempt federally funded projects from the Scaffold Law, and instead place them on the standard of comparative negligence.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to enter into the record a letter of support from over 65 organizations throughout New York State supporting my bill.

[The information follows:]

**Letter of January 7, 2021, from the Allied Building Metal Industries et al.,
Submitted for the Record by Hon. Chris Jacobs**

JANUARY 7, 2021.

DEAR MEMBER OF CONGRESS:

On behalf of more than sixty-five membership organizations, including trade associations, chambers of commerce, housing advocates, agricultural organizations, and municipal advocates, we are writing to request that you support HR 1300, the Infrastructure Expansion Act of 2021. Introduced by your colleague Representative Chris Jacobs (R-NY), this bill will protect scarce federal infrastructure funds imposing the same liability standard on federally-funded New York projects that is found in 49 other states.

Unfortunately, New York remains the only state in the nation to impose absolute liability on construction projects under Labor Law 240/241, a statute known as the “Scaffold Law.” This outdated law holds property owners and contractors fully liable for worksite accidents, regardless of the contributing fault of the worker. To understand the injustice of this law, take for example, that the courts have ruled time and time again that the intoxication of an employee is not a defense for an employer under the statute.

Due to this absurd standard, it costs more to build in New York than anywhere else in the country. Data collected from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey indicates that the insurance costs on cross-border construction projects are doubled on the New York side. Researchers at the Rockefeller Institute of Government found that for taxpayers, the law results in a cost of more than \$785 million annually. It is estimated that New Yorkers spent more than \$200 million in added costs for the Mario Cuomo (Tappan Zee) Bridge due to additional costs of the statute. The New York City School Construction Authority estimated the law cost them over \$400 million in a three-year period.

Defenders of the Scaffold Law say that it improves worksite safety, but data shows the opposite. A study deemed “practice ready” by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering concluded that the law actually increases both fatal and non-fatal injuries by 670 each year.

With the current unprecedented strain on state and local budgets, the federal government cannot continue to waste valuable infrastructure dollars.

We respectfully request your support,

*Allied Building Metal Industries.
American Council of Engineering
Companies of New York.
American Property Casualty Insurance
Association.
American Subcontractors Association.
Associated Builders and Contractors of
New York State.
Associated General Contractors of New
York State.
Association for a Better Long Island.
Big I NY.
Bronx Chamber of Commerce.
Brooklyn Chamber of Commerce.
Buffalo Building Owners & Managers
Association.
Buffalo Niagara Partnership.
Builders Exchange of Rochester.
Builders Exchange of the Southern Tier.
Building Contractors Association of
Westchester & Mid-Hudson Region.
Building Trades Employers Association.
Business Council of New York State.
Business Council of Westchester.
Capital Region Chamber of Commerce.
Chamber Alliance of New York State.*

*Chemung County Chamber of Commerce.
Commerce Chenango.
Construction Exchange of Buffalo &
Western New York.
Construction Industry Council of
Westchester & Hudson Valley.
Corning Area Chamber of Commerce.
Cortland County Chamber of Commerce.
Eastern Contractors Association.
Empire State Subcontractors Association.
Fulton Montgomery Chamber of
Commerce.
General Contractors Association of New
York.
Genesee County Chamber of Commerce.
Greater Binghamton Chamber of
Commerce.
Greater Olean Chamber of Commerce.
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce.
Habitat for Humanity of New York State.
Home Builders & Remodelers of Central
New York.
Hornell Area Chamber of Commerce.
Hudson Valley Gateway Chamber.
Hudson Valley Mechanical Contractors
Association.*

<i>Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce & CVB.</i>	<i>New York State Builders Association.</i>
<i>Lawsuit Reform Alliance of New York.</i>	<i>Partnership for New York City.</i>
<i>Long Island Builders Institute.</i>	<i>Professional Insurance Agents of New York.</i>
<i>Minority & Women Contractors & Developers Association.</i>	<i>Real Estate Board of New York.</i>
<i>National Association of Minority Contractors—New York Tri-State Chapter.</i>	<i>Rochester Home Builders Association.</i>
<i>National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies.</i>	<i>Rome Area Chamber of Commerce.</i>
<i>National Association of Surety Bond Producers.</i>	<i>Sheet Metal & Air Conditioning Contractors of New York State.</i>
<i>National Federation of Independent Business New York.</i>	<i>Society of Indo-American Engineers and Architects.</i>
<i>Northeastern Retail Lumber Association.</i>	<i>Special Riggers Association of New York City.</i>
<i>Northeastern Subcontractors Association.</i>	<i>Subcontractors Trade Association.</i>
<i>New York Conference of Mayors.</i>	<i>Syracuse Builder's Exchange.</i>
<i>New York Farm Bureau.</i>	<i>Trucking Association of New York.</i>
<i>New York State Association for Affordable Housing.</i>	<i>Ulster County Regional Chamber of Commerce.</i>
	<i>Westchester County Association.</i>
	<i>West Seneca Chamber of Commerce.</i>
	<i>Wyoming County Chamber of Commerce.</i>

Mr. JACOBS. The Scaffold Law is particularly challenging for minority- and women-owned businesses, as the inflated premiums they must pay for liability insurance put them at a competitive disadvantage when bidding projects against larger firms. That is why groups such as the Minority and Women Contractors and Developers Association and the National Association of Minority Contractors have been vocal supporters of Scaffold Law reform. I am proud to have their support on my bill.

Other supporters of Scaffold Law reform and my bill include the New York State Association for Affordable Housing. The Scaffold Law is estimated to add \$10,000 to the cost of a single-family home in New York State. Anyone interested in making New York State more affordable for families should support inclusion of my legislation in any infrastructure package.

Another supporter I am proud to have is Habitat for Humanity. Like the New York State Association for Affordable Housing, Habitat for Humanity appreciates efforts to make housing in New York State more affordable. However, they have an additional issue with the Scaffold Law. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Habitat and its volunteer partners rushed to help Long Island recover. However, they struggled to find insurance because of the Scaffold Law, and were hindered to make an impact after that disaster.

For the sake of our roads, and our bridges, and our schools, our railroads, our homes, and all New Yorkers, the Scaffold Law must be reformed. What I am asking for today is consideration in any infrastructure package to include provisions in my bill which would mandate that comparative negligence be utilized.

Why am I saying this? If \$1 billion right now came in New York State and Federal taxpayer money through an infrastructure bill, 10 percent of that would be peeled off because of the Scaffold Law, \$1 million would be essentially wasted. I want that money, and I think most New Yorkers want that money spent on real projects. Reforming the Scaffold Law for an infrastructure bill will make that happen.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

[Mr. Jacobs' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Chris Jacobs, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Hello. Thank you to the Committee for letting us be here today.

As we move forward with efforts to expand our nation's infrastructure I want to bring to your attention an important issue in my home state of New York. New York is currently the only state in the union to impose absolute liability on employers and property owners for gravity-related injuries. This archaic standard is enshrined in New York's Labor Law 240/241, otherwise known as the "Scaffold Law."

Absolute liability under the Scaffold Law means employers and property owners are fully liable for worksite accidents, regardless of the contributing fault of the worker. To understand the injustice of this law, take for example that courts have ruled repeatedly that the intoxication of an employee is not a defense for an employer under the statute. Contrast this with the liability standard of comparative negligence—the standard in every other state—which allows for a reasonable determination of fault between two parties.

Studies have indicated the Scaffold Law adds approximately 8–10% to the cost of construction in New York State. Due in part to the extreme standard set by the Scaffold Law, the cost of construction in New York is higher than anywhere else in the nation, resulting in unnecessary taxpayer spending across all levels of government. According to one study, the Scaffold Law is expected to add an additional \$180 to \$300 million to the Gateway Program. The Tappan Zee Bridge is estimated to have incurred up to \$400 million in additional costs due to the Scaffold Law. In a recent amicus brief, the New York City Transit Authority stated it is in an existential financial crisis. Its public liability burden in 2019 was \$150 million dollars, much of that due to the Scaffold Law. These costs represent hundreds of millions of dollars that could have gone toward improving our schools, repairing the New York City subway, or fixing our roads.

Defenders of the Scaffold Law say that it improves worksite safety, but data shows the opposite. A study deemed "practice ready" by the Transportation Research Board of the National Academies of Science, Medicine, and Engineering concluded that the law actually increases both fatal and non-fatal injuries by 670 each year.

The challenges presented by the Scaffold Law are why I have championed the Infrastructure Expansion Act (H.R. 1300), which would exempt federally funded projects from the Scaffold Law and instead place them on a standard of comparative negligence.

Mr. Chairman I would like entered into the record a letter of support from over sixty-five organizations throughout New York State supporting my bill.

The Scaffold Law is particularly challenging for minority and women owned businesses, as the inflated premiums they must pay for liability insurance puts them at a competitive disadvantage when bidding for projects against larger firms. That is why groups such as the Minority & Women Contractors & Developers Association and the National Association of Minority Contractors have been vocal supporters of Scaffold Law reform. I am proud to have their support for my bill.

Other supporters of Scaffold Law reform and my bill include the New York State Association for Affordable Housing. The Scaffold Law is estimated to add \$10,000 to the cost of a single-family home in New York State. Anyone interested in making New York State more affordable for families should support inclusion of my legislation in any infrastructure package.

Another supporter I am proud to have is Habitat for Humanity. Like the New York State Association for Affordable Housing, Habitat for Humanity appreciates efforts to make housing in New York more affordable. However, they have an additional issue with the Scaffold Law. In the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Habitat and its volunteer partners rushed to help Long Island recover, however they struggled to find insurance because of the Scaffold Law.

For the sake of our roads, our bridges, our schools, our railroads, our homes and all New Yorkers, the Scaffold Law must be reformed. I urge the Committee to include my legislation in the infrastructure package. With that I yield back.

Ms. DAVIDS. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair would like to recognize Mr. Mann from Kansas for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. TRACEY MANN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF KANSAS**

Mr. MANN. Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, members of the committee, including my Kansas colleague, Sharice Davids. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak with you about transportation and infrastructure priorities for the First Congressional District of Kansas.

My district, aptly named the Big First, is the 11th largest congressional district in the country, spanning 63 counties in central and western Kansas. As you can imagine, with a district that size, we greatly rely on roads, rails, waterways, and other forms of infrastructure to connect our rural communities to one another and to the rest of the world.

The Big First backbone is agriculture. It is home to more than 60,000 farms, and is made up of farmers, ranchers, feedlot managers, nutritionists, ethanol producers, ag lenders, and agribusiness owners who feed, fuel, and clothe the world. Farmers and ranchers depend on roads, bridges, and rail to safely transport these goods to market.

So from the beginning of planting season to the end of harvest, and from the time a baby calf hits the ground to the time we take them to town, these forms of transport help to efficiently deliver our ag products around the globe. However, moving livestock and perishable ag commodities brings a separate set of issues for drivers that Kansans are well aware of, as the leader in cattle production.

For decades, farmers and ranchers in the transport of ag goods across our district and State have fallen victim to archaic trucking regulations, leaving little to no room for livestock hauling exemptions. S. 792, the Haulers of Agriculture and Livestock Safety Act, the HAULS Act, as introduced by Senator Deb Fischer, my neighbor to the north in Nebraska, would address these concerns.

The HAULS Act would update the hours-of-service exemption for ag products and livestock that have been regularly modified by Congress to provide flexibility to ag and livestock haulers. This bill would add 150 air-miles on the back end of the trip, allowing drivers the extra time to safely navigate the rural roads where they haul. It would also allow the hours-of-service exemptions to continue nationwide all year round, removing the seasonal limits set by State-designated planting and harvesting periods.

I am supportive of the work of the coalition of more than 100 ag organizations to modernize the ag exemptions to the hours-of-service rule and provide flexibility for haulers, and urge the committee to review the legislation in full, if similar legislation is introduced in the House, or if the HAULS Act reaches the House floor for a vote.

Another important issue for rural districts like mine is aviation, which is supported through Essential Air Service and Small Community Air Service Development Programs. Both programs ensure that our smaller communities can maintain a minimal level of scheduled air service to larger cities, whether through direct support or by working with communities to address air service issues.

As the home State to the "air capital of the world," Essential Air Service enables communities like Salina, Liberal, Dodge City, Gar-

den City, and Hays to connect to the world through aviation. As your committee continues work on transportation and infrastructure legislation, we must ensure that rural communities are part of the conversation and a priority for these discussions.

Beyond transportation, the importance of broadband cannot be overstated in connecting rural communities to the rest of the country, whether for virtual school, telemedicine, or remote work. Rural broadband must be considered as an important piece in our infrastructure conversations, whether occurring in this committee or others across Congress.

The roads, highways, rails, aviation, as well as broadband connect all of us across the country, and add to the quality of life in rural communities. Our investments today will promote rural economies long into the future and make our communities a prosperous place to live for the next generations.

Thank you, Congresswoman Davids, for the opportunity to speak on the issue impacting the First Congressional District of Kansas, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

[Mr. Mann's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Tracey Mann, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Kansas**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you about transportation and infrastructure priorities from the First District of Kansas.

My district, aptly nicknamed the "Big First", is the 11th largest Congressional District in the country, spanning 63 counties in central and western Kansas. As you can imagine, with a district that size, we greatly rely on roads, rail, waterways, and other forms of infrastructure to connect our rural communities to one another and to the rest of the world.

The Big First's backbone is agriculture; it is home to more than 60,000 farms and is made up of farmers, ranchers, feed lot managers, nutritionists, ethanol producers, ag lenders, and agribusiness owners who feed, fuel, and clothe the world. Farmers and ranchers depend on roads, bridges, and rail to safely transport these goods to market.

From the beginning of planting season to the end of the harvest, and from the time a baby calf hits the ground to the time we take them to town, these forms of transport help to efficiently deliver our agricultural products around the globe.

However, moving livestock and perishable ag commodities brings a separate set of issues for drivers that Kansans are well aware of, as the leader in cattle production. For decades, farmers and ranchers and transporters of agricultural goods across our district and state have fallen victim to archaic trucking regulations leaving little to no room for livestock hauling exemptions.

S. 792, the Haulers of Agriculture and Livestock Safety (HAULS) Act as introduced by Senator Deb Fischer, my neighbor to the north in Nebraska, would address these concerns. The HAULS Act would update the hours-of-service exemptions for ag products and livestock that have been regularly modified by Congress, to provide flexibility to ag and livestock haulers. This bill would add 150 air-miles on the back end of the trip, allowing drivers the extra time to safely navigate the rural roads with their haul. It would also allow the hours-of-service exemptions to continue nationwide all year-round, removing the seasonal limits set by state designated planting and harvest periods.

I am supportive of the work of a coalition of more than 100 ag organizations to modernize the agricultural exemptions to the hours-of-service rule and provide flexibility for haulers and urge the Committee to review the legislation in-full if similar legislation is introduced in the House or if the HAULS Act reaches the House for a vote.

Another important issue for rural districts like mine is aviation, which is supported through the Essential Air Service and Small Community Air Service Development Programs. Both programs ensure that our smaller communities can main-

tain a minimal level of scheduled air service to larger cities, whether through direct support or by working with communities to address air service issues. As the home state to the Air Capital of the World, Essential Air Service enables communities like Salina, Liberal, Dodge City, Garden City, and Hays to connect to the world through aviation.

As your committee continues work on transportation and infrastructure legislation, we must ensure that rural communities are part of the conversation and a priority in these discussions. Beyond transportation, the importance of broadband cannot be overstated in connecting rural communities to the rest of the country, whether for virtual school, telemedicine, or remote work. Rural broadband must be considered as an important piece in our infrastructure conversations, whether occurring on this committee or others across Congress.

The roads, highways, rails, aviation, as well as broadband connect all of us across the country and add to the quality of life in rural communities. Our investments today will promote rural economies long into the future and make our communities a prosperous place to live for the next generations.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on the issues impacting the First District of Kansas, and I yield back the remainder of my time.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, Rep. Mann, I appreciate your advocacy on behalf of our State.

Next the Chair would like to recognize Rep. Higgins from New York for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. BRIAN HIGGINS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. HIGGINS. Yes, thank you very much, and the chairman and the ranking member.

It is often said that, in urban design, there is no neutrality, that the built environment either serves to hurt or to heal. A decade of expressway building in the Nation in the 1950s, including Buffalo, fed that era's obsession with automobiles. It hurt city neighborhoods, and it destroyed a lot of parkland and a lot of quality of life, including 80 acres of Olmsted parks and parkways in Buffalo, New York.

The Kensington Expressway destroyed nearly 45 acres of parkland, including Olmsted's grandest parkway, denying for decades an entire neighborhood the enjoyment and health benefits that parks offer, which various groups are trying to fix. The Scajaquada Expressway in Buffalo dissected Delaware Park, and stole more than 40 acres of land. We see this throughout the entire Nation, that while we are going to rebuild the infrastructure of the country, we have to fix the infrastructure that has destroyed certain communities, and those communities are underserved communities in places like Buffalo, New York.

I am very optimistic about the \$20 billion that is in the infrastructure bill to restore neighborhoods that have been destroyed by expressway construction. I think it should be more. I think it should be \$50 billion, because those communities have been denied investment. They have been denied health and safety for the people that live in and around those communities.

We have a great opportunity here to rebuild the infrastructure of our country, but we also have an obligation, more so than anything else, to help those underserved communities that have been devastated by decades of expressway building. We need more parks. We need more parkways. We need more pedestrian and bicycle access so that everybody will have access to good parks, and

the healing power of parks and parkways that these expressways destroyed so many years ago.

With that, I will yield back.

[Mr. Higgins' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Brian Higgins, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Chair DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak before you today to talk about the importance of infrastructure investment to the future of the communities I serve in Western New York state.

Mark Zandi, a conservative economist from Moody's Analytics, estimates every one dollar in infrastructure investment generates \$1.60 in economic growth. Beth Ann Bovino, the chief economist for Standard and Poors, thinks that number could be as high as \$2.70 when taking into account current economic conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr. Chairman, we have a once in a generation opportunity for historic infrastructure investment. We need to get this right, and we need to make sure that our priorities in this bill bring communities together, providing a remedy to past problems.

We need to start thinking about what a post-pandemic world looks like and how we can renew and rebuild.

Under previous national efforts devoted to infrastructure investment, my community flourished.

We built the Erie Canal to connect the eastern seaboard to the Great Lakes, making Buffalo a maritime harbor to connect American goods to the world.

The construction of railroads and the production of cheap and affordable hydro-power created by harnessing the power of Niagara Falls, we became an industrial powerhouse and for a time one of the most prosperous communities in the world.

And to address some of the public health challenges we faced in the 19th century, like cholera, we built one of the most significant public park systems in the country, designed by Frederick Law Olmsted, a public good that all can still enjoy as a refuge.

But infrastructure decisions can sometimes hurt, not heal. It can tear our communities apart.

Robert Moses used brute political force to construct highways through, and throughout, cities across New York State including Buffalo and Niagara Falls. They destroyed the economic viability of countless neighborhoods and isolated Black and Brown communities from opportunity.

The Skyway, the Kensington, the Scajaquada, the aptly-named Robert Moses Parkway in Niagara Falls—have split up neighborhoods, degraded our public parks, and separated people from the natural resources they should be able to enjoy as well as each other.

So the American Jobs Plan presents us with a new opportunity to fix past mistakes, bring people together and promote equitable development, and improve the life quality and productivity of our community and our country.

I am pleased that the plan proposes a \$20 billion targeted investment to repair the problems caused by past decisions that disregarded the lived environment and experience of people in neighborhoods highways were constructed through.

This program means that an Olmsted-designed park median could be restored by downgrading the Kensington Expressway on Buffalo's East Side, reconnecting a neighborhood designed to be cohesive but that has suffered from being split apart.

The Scajaquada Expressway, could actually be reset as a parkway designed for the safety of nearby residents who want to enjoy Delaware Park, not as an under-utilized speed trap. This downgrade would open up new opportunities for recreation and ecological habitat restoration.

It means the obsolete Skyway can be removed so that our community can fully benefit from its waterfront, obscured for over century by industrial development.

And it means the City of Niagara Falls can once again be connected to its natural wonders along the Niagara River Gorge by removing the Robert Moses Parkway.

Mr. Chairman, these are just a few examples of the transformational initiatives that the American Jobs Plan, and specifically this highway bill, could bring to my community.

These investments will create jobs, and good American jobs, but this highway bill presents an opportunity to make our communities better for everyone that live there. I urge you to work with me to help bring voice to my community.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to present this testimony today.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, Congressman.

The Chair would now like to recognize Mrs. Luria from Virginia for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ELAINE G. LURIA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

Mrs. LURIA. And thank you, Rep. Davids, and thank you to Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and to my colleagues on the committee for giving me this opportunity.

I would like to bring to attention some critical issues that are important not only in my district, but across the Nation. As you all know, our Nation's infrastructure has been neglected for far too long. Our bridges, roads, and transit are aging and in desperate need of repair.

One thing I would like to start with is talking about harbors and the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their work during the last Congress with the Water Resources Development Act, WRDA, for 2020. The culmination of that work included provisions to ensure full utilization of the harbor maintenance tax revenues, as well as unlocking more than \$9 billion in unspent balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.

Full use of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund is essential to ensuring our Nation's navigation channels are adequately maintained. This is especially important in my district, where the Port of Virginia has begun dredging to deepen and widen the Norfolk Harbor, while we await a "new start" designation and Federal construction funding.

Proper maintenance both now and after completion of the Norfolk Harbor's channel improvement are critical to ensure the channel is safe and efficient for both commercial and military traffic. I hope that our colleagues on the Appropriations Committee take advantage of the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund provisions to not only fully fund operation and maintenance at our ports and harbors, but also to increase the construction funding to keep the critical projects like the Norfolk Harbor on schedule, and delivering its economic benefits of nearly \$4 billion to the Nation, more than \$10 return for every Federal dollar invested.

Similarly, as this committee works on an infrastructure package, I ask that you include the Army Corps navigation projects as essential components in building back better.

We would like to also touch on rail, which is a critical element, as well, of our intermodal transit and port facility located in southeastern Virginia. It is vital to not only my district, but the Nation's economy, as well. Last year the Port of Virginia was awarded a \$20 million Federal grant to expand its rail operation, and this grant would allow the port to double the existing capacity of the Norfolk International Terminals Central Rail Yard.

Currently, 34 percent of the port's total volume moves to market by double-stack rail service, and that demand is forecast to in-

crease 40 percent, with the need for capacity to process an additional 200,000 containers for export, annually. Without expansion, the terminals' current operation could not keep up with growth, resulting in more movement of freight by truck on local roads and highways, rather than by rail.

Expansion in Hampton Roads maintains the expected level of service to cargo owners all the way to the Midwest and Ohio Valley and other inland markets.

Next I would like to mention coastal resiliency. Like many communities that are close to the ocean, coastal Virginia experiences challenges related to recurrent flooding and rising sea levels. Our region needs resilient infrastructure that stands strong against the challenges of a changing climate.

Virginia's Second Congressional District is home to Naval Station Norfolk, which is the world's largest naval station. And we also have installations from every branch of the service. In 2019, a Department of Defense report found that the Greater Hampton Roads is one of the most vulnerable areas of flooding in the entire United States. When it floods in coastal Virginia, it becomes more than just a local nuisance. It truly does become a national security issue. We must make investments in durable infrastructure to protect both our local economy and our national security and military readiness.

Last I would like to touch on public transit, which is also critical in coastal Virginia. Hampton Roads has one of the largest bus networks in the Commonwealth of Virginia. And an example is Route 20, which is one of the most populated bus routes in the Commonwealth, from Virginia Beach to downtown Norfolk. Bus transit should be a priority in upcoming surface transportation bills because it is an affordable way to expand public transit.

An overwhelming number of my constituents use buses to commute to and from work and school, medical appointments, essential shopping, and on all of their daily tasks. So bus service is an integral part of coastal Virginia's economy, as it is many other places around the country. So I urge that we provide adequate resources for modernizing and expanding our public transit networks.

In closing I would like again to thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves and my colleagues on the committee for giving me the chance to speak about transportation and infrastructure priorities throughout coastal Virginia. By making these much-needed investments in our infrastructure, we can set our communities up for sustainable economic success in the future.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[Mrs. Luria's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Elaine G. Luria, a Representative in Congress
from the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and to my colleagues on the Committee for giving me this opportunity. I would like to bring some attention to a few critical issues not only in my district but across the nation.

As you all know, our nation's infrastructure has been neglected for far too long. Our bridges, roads, and transit are aging and are in desperate need of repair.

HARBOR MAINTENANCE TRUST FUND

- I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for their work during the last Congress with WRDA 2020.
- The culmination of their work included provisions to ensure full use of Harbor Maintenance Tax revenues as well as unlocking the more than \$9 billion unspent balance in the Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund.
- Full use of the HMT is essential to ensuring our nation's navigation channels are adequately maintained.
- This is especially important in my District where The Port of Virginia has begun dredging to deepen and widen Norfolk Harbor, while we await a New Start designation and federal construction funding.
- Proper maintenance both now and after completion of Norfolk Harbor's channel improvement are critical to ensure the channel is safe and efficient for both commercial and military traffic.
- I hope that our colleagues on the Appropriations committee take advantage of the HMTF provisions to not only fully fund Operations and Maintenance at our ports and harbors but to also increase the construction funding to keep critical projects like Norfolk Harbor on schedule and delivering its economic benefits of nearly \$4 billion to the nation—more than \$10 returned for every federal dollar invested.
- Similarly, as this committee works on an infrastructure package, I ask you to include the Army Corps' navigation program as an essential component in Building Back Better.

RAIL

- Expanding rail access through the Port of Virginia is vital to my district as well as the nation's economy and safety.
- Last year, the Port was awarded a \$20 million federal grant to expand its rail operation. This grant will allow the Port to double the existing capacity of the Norfolk International Terminal's Central Rail Yard.
- Currently, 34 percent of the Port's total volume moves to market by double-stack rail service, and that demand is forecast to exceed 40 percent with a need for capacity to process an additional 200,000 containers for export.
- Without expansion, the terminal's current operation could not keep up with growth, resulting in more movement of freight by truck on local roads and highways.
- Expansion in Hampton Roads maintains the expected level of service to cargo owners in the Midwest, Ohio Valley, and other inland markets.

COASTAL RESILIENCY

- Like many communities that are close to the ocean, Coastal Virginia experiences the challenges of recurrent flooding and rising sea levels. Our region needs resilient infrastructure that stands strong against the challenges of our changing climate.
- Virginia's Second District is home to Naval Station Norfolk, which is the world's largest naval station and installations from every branch of service.
 - In 2019, a Department of Defense report found that greater Hampton Roads is one of the areas "most vulnerable to flooding" in the entire United States.
 - When it floods in Coastal Virginia, it becomes more than just a local nuisance—it becomes a national security issue.
- We must make investments in innovative and durable infrastructure to protect both, our local economy and our national security and military readiness.
- As a Navy veteran representing Hampton Roads, I know America's military communities desperately need funding for infrastructure projects to promote readiness. We must fund and improve on initiatives like the Defense Community Infrastructure Program to put our communities in the best position moving forward.

TRANSIT

- Transit is critical in Coastal Virginia. Hampton Roads has one of the largest bus networks in the Commonwealth. Route 20, for example, is one of the most populated bus routes in the Commonwealth, running from Virginia Beach to Downtown Norfolk.
- Bus transit should be a priority in an upcoming surface transportation bill because it is an affordable way to expand public transit. An overwhelming number

of my constituents use buses to commute to and from work, in addition to school, workforce development, medical appointments, and essential shopping and retail.

- Bus service is an integral part of Coastal Virginia's economy, providing jobs in the community and helping many working families throughout our community get from place to place, especially in rural areas.

CLOSING

- Again, I would like to thank Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and my colleagues on the Committee for giving me the chance to speak about transportation and infrastructure priorities throughout Coastal Virginia.
- By making much-needed investments in our infrastructure, we can set our communities up for sustainable economic success.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, the gentlewoman yields back.

Next the Chair will recognize the gentleman from Hawaii, Mr. Case, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ED CASE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF HAWAII

Mr. CASE. Chair, Ranking Member, and members of our U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to update the committee on key transportation and infrastructure issues and needs from my home State of Hawaii.

I would like to highlight three today for your consideration and assistance: number 1, adapting our surface transportation network to the impacts of climate change on coastal communities; number 2, supporting our critical Honolulu Area Rapid Transit, or HART, project; and number 3, strengthening efficient safety and community disruption regulation of commercial helicopter and small aircraft operations.

First, as an island State, Hawaii is uniquely challenged by the growing threats of climate change. Sea levels are projected to rise 20 to 30 percent above the global mean by 2100, resulting in coastal erosion and flooding already-threatened hundreds of miles of key coastal roadways in Hawaii alone. Only a large and sustained investment in critical infrastructure to include coastal resiliency and road relocation will maintain our surface transportation network. I urge the committee to continue to support new technologies and strategies and projects to meet this challenge.

Second, and in the same vein, Hawaii, and especially the urban center of Honolulu, is in critical need of alternative modes of transportation. A 2019 study ranked Honolulu as the single-most traffic congested of all medium-sized American cities. Mass transit remains our best current, and especially long-term, option to provide efficient and reliable transportation in our urban core. Our HART project, now over 50 percent complete, has, like virtually all other large mass transit projects, endured substantial cost increases and delays. However, it is even more critical now to Hawaii's transportation and infrastructure, present and future. I ask for this committee's continued support for HART and other mass transit projects, nationwide.

Finally, I ask for the committee's support of full and responsive regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration—and if the FAA remains unable or unwilling to do so, by other Federal, State, and

local regulatory agencies—of rapidly increasing safety and community disruption concerns from commercial tour helicopters and small aircraft operations.

In many parts of our country, but especially Hawaii, these operations have accelerated rapidly in recent years. Yet regulatory capacity and commitment by the FAA has not kept pace, with tragic and widespread consequences: 2019 pre-COVID alone saw 17 tour flight and skydiving accidents nationwide, with 37 tragic deaths from 6 of those crashes. Hawaii saw 3 dead in the crash of a commercial air tour helicopter into a residential neighborhood, 11 more dead in the crash of a commercial skydiving plane, and then 7 more dead in a commercial air tour helicopter crash in a remote mountain region.

The National Transportation Safety Board, which reviews incidents, but cannot regulate changes, has concluded that existing safety-related regulation of commercial tour helicopters and small aircraft skydiving operations is insufficient. Just yesterday the NTSB reported that 1 factor in the 11-dead skydiving crash was insufficient FAA inspection of the aircraft's safety. Many of the NTSB-specific recommendations have not been adopted by the FAA.

These operations have also disrupted whole communities with excessive noise and other impacts on the ground, destroyed the peace and sanctity of special places, and weakened security and management of national security operations.

The FAA states that its responsibility is strictly operational safety and national airspace efficiency and does not extend to ground disruption and other negative impacts. As a result, the operators are virtually free to fly wherever, whenever, and as often as they want. And they do, with little or no self-regulation.

I need and ask for this committee's assistance in resolving this intolerable situation. For starters, I seek your support for H.R. 389, my Safe and Quiet Skies Act, which would require the FAA to implement the NTSB's recommended enhanced safety regulations; prohibit flights over certain Federal properties, to include military installations, national cemeteries, and national parks; require standard equipment to monitor the location of flights; prevent pilots from also serving as tour guides; and limit decibel levels to those commonly applied to operations in residential areas on the ground. There are other approaches that get to the same place, and I ask to work with this committee toward their implementation.

In closing, I want to extend my warmest mahalo for your leadership in fixing our Nation's transportation and infrastructure, and for your consideration of Hawaii's critical needs.

I yield back.

[Mr. Case's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Ed Case, a Representative in Congress from
the State of Hawaii**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves and Members of the U.S. House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee:

Aloha and mahalo for the opportunity to update the Committee on key transportation and infrastructure issues and needs for my home state of Hawai'i. I would like to highlight three today for your consideration and assistance: (1) adapting our

surface transportation network to the impacts of climate change on coastal communities; (2) supporting our critical Honolulu Area Rapid Transit (HART) project; and (3) strengthening deficient safety and community disruption regulation of commercial helicopter and small aircraft operations.

As an island state, Hawai'i is uniquely challenged by the growing threat of climate change. Sea levels are projected to rise 20% to 30% above the global mean by 2100. Resulting coastal erosion and flooding already threaten hundreds of miles of key coastal roadways in Hawai'i alone. Only a large and sustained investment in critical infrastructure to include coastal resiliency and road relocation will maintain our surface transportation network. I urge the Committee to continue to support new technologies and strategies and projects to meet this challenge.

In the same vein, Hawai'i and especially the urban center of Honolulu is in critical need of alternate modes of transportation. A 2019 study ranks Honolulu as the single most traffic-congested of all medium-sized American cities. Mass transit remains our best current and especially long-term option to provide efficient and reliable transportation in our urban core.

Our HART project, now over 50% complete, has, like virtually all other large mass transit projects, endured substantial cost increases and delays. However, it is even more critical now to Hawaii's transportation and infrastructure present and future. I ask for this Committee's continued support for HART and other mass transit projects nationwide.

Finally, I ask for the Committee's support of full and responsive regulation by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and, if the FAA remains unable or unwilling to do so, by other federal, state and local regulatory agencies, of rapidly increasing safety and community disruption concerns from commercial tour helicopters and small aircraft operations.

In many parts of the country, but especially Hawai'i, these operations have accelerated rapidly in recent years. Yet regulatory capacity and commitment by the FAA has not kept pace, with tragic and widespread consequences.

2019 pre-COVID alone saw 17 tour flight and skydiving accidents nationwide, with 37 tragic deaths from six of those crashes. Hawai'i saw three dead in the crash of a commercial air tour helicopter into a residential neighborhood, eleven more dead in the crash of a commercial skydiving plane and then seven more dead in a commercial air tour helicopter crash in a remote mountain region.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), which reviews incidents but cannot regulate changes, has concluded that existing safety-related regulation of commercial tour helicopters and small aircraft skydiving operations is insufficient. Just yesterday, the NTSB reported that one factor in the eleven-dead skydiving crash was insufficient FAA inspection of the aircraft safety. Many of the NTSB's specific recommendations have not been adopted by the FAA.

These operations have also disrupted whole communities with excessive noise and other impacts, destroyed the peace and sanctity of special places and weakened security and management of national security operations. The FAA states that its responsibility is strictly operational safety and national airspace efficiency and does not extend to ground disruption and other negative impacts. As a result, the operators are virtually free to fly wherever, whenever and as often as they want. And they do, with little to no self-regulation.

I need and ask for this Committee's assistance in resolving this intolerable situation. For starters, I seek your support for H.R. 389, my Safe and Quiet Skies Act, which would require the FAA to implement the NTSB's recommended enhanced safety regulations, prohibit flights over certain federal properties, to include military installations, national cemeteries and national parks, require standard equipment to monitor the location of flights, prevent pilots from also serving as tour guides, and limit decibel levels to those commonly applied to operations in residential areas. There are other approaches that get to the same place, and I ask to work with this Committee towards their implementation.

In closing, I want to extend my warmest mahalo for your leadership in fixing our nation's transportation and infrastructure and for your consideration of Hawaii's critical needs.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, the gentleman yields back.

The Chair would now recognize the gentlelady from California, Ms. Speier, for 5 minutes.

[Pause.]

Ms. DAVIDS. OK, we will go ahead and move on to the gentlelady from Texas, Ms. Escobar.

You are recognized for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. VERONICA ESCOBAR, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS**

Ms. ESCOBAR. Thank you so much, Madam Chair, for this opportunity to discuss policy priorities critical to El Paso while the committee is working toward the reintroduction of H.R. 2.

El Paso is a vibrant border community, home to over 800,000 people. It has seen steady growth over the past decade, but our infrastructure spending has historically not kept pace. Like most of America, our highways and bridges are congested and in disrepair, causing issues for locals who rely on them to get to work, go to school, and more.

However, infrastructure issues in border communities like mine are not just problems for locals, but for every American. Our roads are critical trade arteries for the rest of the country, with over \$800 billion in trade entering through El Paso's ports of entry in 2019 alone. In short, border infrastructure is national and international infrastructure.

While local governments and State agencies like the Texas Department of Transportation have been doing what they can, the Federal Government needs to step up. That is why I am urging the committee to consider increasing the border set-aside created in the FAST Act for surface transportation program funds from 5 percent to 10 percent in H.R. 2.

I am also asking the committee to make this set-aside mandatory for border States. There are no border Members on T&I, and I want to ensure that the committee understands why border communities are so important. High-quality border infrastructure benefits not just those who live on the border, but those far from the border, as well. We need to give strategically located border communities like El Paso the resources that we need to revitalize our economies, better our residents' lives, and enhance our role as key trade corridors for our country.

The other critical element to border infrastructure are our land ports of entry. These ports are just as crucial as our coastal counterparts, with billions in trade crossing by land every day. They also serve a national security interest, with Customs and Border Protection using them to facilitate everyday flow and preventing contraband from entering our borders.

Nevertheless, many of these ports were built in the last century and are outdated. Such conditions are impairing CBP's ability to perform their mission, leading to significant congestion, long wait times, and security concerns. These delays also pose an environmental and health risk for neighborhoods surrounding the ports, because the idling cars spew harmful particulates into the air.

Local governments are trying to do their part by investing in and seeking funding for infrastructure around the ports. An example is the Stanton Street Bridge Intelligent Transportation System I am submitting for the committee's consideration under the surface reauthorization process. Yet because these ports play such a critical role for our national economy, I urge the committee to include a significant investment for inland port infrastructure and tech-

nology in H.R. 2, because the Federal Government has a stake in international trade and commerce.

Finally, I would like to call the committee's attention to colonias, which exist exclusively along the U.S.-Mexico border. Sometimes referred to as "the Forgotten America," these communities can oftentimes lack suitable roads, access to clean drinking water, and sewage treatment.

Last year the House of Representatives moved to include two of my colonia-related amendments in the final version of H.R. 2. The first directed the Department of Transportation to conduct a study of colonia infrastructure, and the second would have established the Colonia State of Good Repair Grant program to address colonia surface infrastructure. I am urging the committee to include these amendments in the upcoming version of H.R. 2, with one change. The Colonia State of Good Repair Grant program needs to invest \$500 million over 4 years to make a real dent in the infrastructure needs of colonias across the border.

In addition to surface infrastructure, water infrastructure is desperately needed for all colonias. Based on a recent estimate, El Paso County will need approximately \$700 million to address colonia water and wastewater infrastructure. While President Biden's American Jobs Plan contains historic investments in these areas, I am concerned colonias will be left behind or put into programs where they need to compete with other regions for funding. That is why I urge you to set aside water infrastructure funds specifically for colonias and the local governments helming these projects.

We must also ensure no local match is needed, because putting together a match presents another barrier to access for these already economically disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I look forward to collaborating with the committee further on H.R. 2. I yield back.

[Ms. Escobar's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Veronica Escobar, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Texas**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves. I look forward to taking this opportunity to discuss policy priorities critical to El Paso while you are working towards the reintroduction of H.R. 2.

El Paso is a vibrant border community home to over 800,000 people. It has seen steady growth over the past decade, but our infrastructure spending is not keeping pace. Our highways and bridges are congested and in disrepair, causing issues for locals who rely on them to get to work, go to school, and more. However, infrastructure issues in border communities like mine are not just problems for locals, but for every American. Our roads act as critical trade arteries for the rest of the country, with over 800 billion dollars in trade entering through El Paso's ports of entry alone in 2019. In short, border infrastructure is national infrastructure. While local governments and state agencies like the Texas Department of Transportation have been doing what they can, the federal government needs to step up. That is why I am urging the committee to consider increasing the border set-aside created in the FAST Act for Surface Transportation Program funds from 5 percent to 10 percent in H.R. 2. I am also asking the committee to make this set-aside mandatory for border states. There is a consistent pattern, particularly in Texas, of underinvesting in border infrastructure and instead shifting funding towards other metropolitan centers. I understand that projects in non-border cities are important, but I believe it is just as important to recognize high quality border infrastructure will benefit

both those who live on the border and those who do not. We need to give border communities the chance to receive just as much funding as other cities so they can revitalize their economies, better their residents' lives, and enhance their role as key trade pathways for our country.

The other critical element to border infrastructure are our land ports of entry. These ports are just as crucial as their coastal counterparts, with billions in trade crossing by land every day. They also serve a national security interest, with Customs and Border Protection using them to facilitate everyday flow and preventing contraband from crossing our borders. Nevertheless, many of these ports were built in the 20th century and are outdated. Such conditions are impairing CBP's ability to perform their mission, leading to further congestion, wait times, and security concerns. These delays also pose an environmental and health risk for neighborhoods surrounding the ports because the idling cars spew harmful particulates into the air. Local governments are trying to do their part by investing and seeking funding for infrastructure around the ports, such as the Stanton Street Bridge Intelligent Transportation System I am submitting for the committee's consideration under the surface reauthorization process. Yet, because these ports play such a critical role for our national economy, I urge the committee to include a significant investment for inland port infrastructure and technology in H.R. 2 because the federal government has a stake in their success.

Finally, I would like to call the committee's attention to colonias, which exist exclusively along the U.S.-Mexico border. Sometimes referred to as "The Forgotten America", these communities can oftentimes lack suitable roads, access to clean drinking water, and sewage treatment. Last year the House of Representatives moved to include two of my colonia related amendments in the final version of H.R. 2. The first directed the Department of Transportation to conduct a study of colonia infrastructure and the second would have established the Colonia State of Good Repair Grant Program to address colonia surface infrastructure. I am urging the committee to include these amendments in the coming version of H.R. 2 with one change. The Colonia State of Good Repair Grant Program needs to invest 500 million dollars over four years to make a real dent in the infrastructure needs of colonias across the border.

In addition to surface infrastructure, water infrastructure is desperately needed for all colonias. Based on a recent estimate, El Paso County will need approximately 700 million dollars to address colonia water and wastewater infrastructure. While President Biden's American Jobs Plan contains historic investments in these areas, I am concerned colonias will be left behind or put into programs where they need to compete with other regions for funding. That is why I urge you to set aside water infrastructure funds specifically for colonias and the local governments helming these projects. We must also ensure no local match is needed because putting together a match presents another barrier to access for these already economically disadvantaged communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today and I look forward to collaborating with the committee further on H.R. 2.

Ms. DAVIDS. Thank you, the gentlelady yields back.

The committee will now stand in recess for 10 minutes.

[Recess.]

Mr. MALINOWSKI [presiding]. The committee will come to order, and I recognize Mr. Espallat for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ADRIANO ESPALLAT, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Mr. ESPALLAT. Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity, members of the committee, for allowing me to testify on the important items I believe should be addressed in a surface transportation reauthorization.

As a recent member of this committee, and I miss being part of it, and the only one representing New York City, there are a number of items that I believe deserve consideration. I want to thank the committee for including a number of my priorities in H.R. 2,

the Moving Forward Act, last year, and I encourage you to include them once again.

My Transportation Alternatives Enhancements Act is critical for encouraging projects to promote safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure and, together with the Complete Streets Act and the SAFE Streets Act, will make our roads safe for all users, while promoting healthier, greener transportation infrastructure.

I also want to applaud the committee's inclusion in H.R. 2 of the new gridlock program to attack the plague of congestion in new and innovative ways. New York City is pioneering a congestion pricing and reduction program, the first of its kind in America. In fact, as a State legislator, I was an advocate of this important measure. And the gridlock program will serve to scale these innovative solutions in a way that improves mobility and efficiency, while improving air quality in minority communities in particular, like the ones that I represent in northern Manhattan and the Bronx.

Additionally, we must use infrastructure investment as a job-generating opportunity for underserved communities. Not only must we develop the pipeline for workers for 21st-century infrastructure projects, but we must also focus our training and hiring efforts in communities that have been historically left behind when these projects hit the ground.

I strongly support the inclusion of an initiative focused on generating partnerships between industry, State and local government, and institutions of higher learning, and vocational programs that target economically disadvantaged communities. For example, the City College of New York in my district has been working to develop a state-of-the-art infrastructure training institute, with purpose-built curricula and on-the-job training initiatives. It will be called the Charles Rangel Institute for Transportation and Infrastructure. And I am currently working very hard with former Congressman Charles Rangel in this endeavor.

I believe that this is a model that can be replicated, targeting communities of color who are often underrepresented in the infrastructure workforce. In fact, greener infrastructure, but no jobs left behind for those communities.

Finally, I want to reiterate my strong support for transit and other major infrastructure investments, initiatives such as BUILD and Capital Investment Grants, which will help to complete the Gateway program.

But most importantly for me, the second phase of the Second Avenue Subway that will go right through East Harlem, a transportation desert that I currently represent, which I had the pleasure of touring with the chairman 2 years ago. In fact, it is a shovel-ready program. The tunnel is already built. It was built back in the 1970s, before the city hit fiscal problems. And so 75 percent of the work is already there.

As we authorize the Federal surface transportation program, it would not only invest more in these key initiatives, but also build upon their success, while ensuring that these programs are implemented in an effective and predictable manner.

The Second Avenue Subway second phase will be a regional project. It will connect with Metro-North to other counties outside

of New York City, a short distance to the airport by bus, La Guardia Airport, and potential water transportation in the new campus established from the west side of that corridor by Columbia University.

As we look forward to authorizing, we should also include policy that ensures a transparent and predictable process for the critical competitive grant programs.

Thank you once again for this opportunity to testify, and for all of your hard work in doing this. I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

[Mr. Espallat's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Adriano Espallat, a Representative in
Congress from the State of New York**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the committee for allowing me this opportunity to testify about important items I believe should be addressed as you consider reauthorizing surface transportation programs. As a former member of this committee, and the only one representing New York City, there are a number of items I believe deserve consideration.

First and foremost, I want to thank the committee for including a number of my priorities in H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, last year. My Transportation Alternatives Enhancements Act is critical for encouraging projects to promote safe bike and pedestrian infrastructure, and together with the Complete Streets Act and the SAFE Streets Act will not only make our roads safe for all users but will direct us toward healthier, greener transportation infrastructure. All or portions of these bills were incorporated into H.R. 2, and I urge you to include them again. I also want to applaud the committee for including the new "gridlock" program to attack the plague of congestion in new, innovative ways. New York City is pioneering a congestion pricing and reduction program, the first of its kind in America, and believe this new program will serve to scale these innovative solutions in a way that improves our local and regional transportation systems and reduces the harmful emissions that have harmed air quality in minority communities like the ones I represent in Northern Manhattan and the Bronx.

Additionally, we must use infrastructure investment as a job-generating opportunity for underserved communities. Not only must we develop the pipeline of workers for 21st-century infrastructure projects, but we must also focus our training and hiring efforts in communities that have been historically left behind when these projects hit the ground. I would strongly support the inclusion of language in surface transportation legislation focused on generating partnerships between industry, state and local governments, and institutions of higher education or vocational training that target economically disadvantaged communities. For example, the City College of New York in my district has been working to develop a state-of-the-art infrastructure training institute with purpose-built curricula and on-the-job training initiatives. I believe this is a model that can be replicated throughout the country targeting communities of color, who are often underrepresented in the infrastructure workforce. In doing so, we can address not only issues of inequity but also a looping skills gap. I also recommend making changes in current Department of Transportation policies that will allow more women- and minority-owned businesses to participate in and contribute to federally financed infrastructure projects. I strongly believe that if we invest in training in diverse communities and promote policies that make projects accessible to a more diverse array of participants, we can create a cycle of success that will redound to the benefit of generations to come.

Mass transit is one of the most important areas in need of investment, not just in New York but throughout America. Regional and local public transportation systems are critical economic drivers that provide communities with access to jobs, education and training opportunities and services, as well as reduce our collective carbon footprint by taking cars off the road. Transit also facilitates growth for local businesses. According to the American Public Transportation Association, each dollar invested in public transportation creates four dollars in economic returns, from job creation to increased business sales. While the majority of this investment occurs at the state and local levels, the federal government provides key support that helps get needed projects off the ground. Programs like the Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Transportation Discretionary Grant program, the Capital Investment Grant program's New Starts, Small Starts and Core

Capacity grants and others accelerate community-changing projects in rural, suburban and urban areas alike, such as the Second Avenue Subway project in my district. As we reauthorize federal surface transportation programs, we must not only invest more in these key initiatives, but also seek to build upon and duplicate their success. We must also ensure these programs are carried in an effective and predictable manner so local transit agencies can carry out needed long-term planning. The previous administration made numerous, unexpected changes to financing requirements and often issued what appeared to be arbitrary, politically-motivated decisions. As we look to reauthorization, we should include policies that ensure a transparent and predictable process for these critical competitive grant programs.

Lastly, but just as important, is the need to review outdated federal formulas that govern the distribution of federal transportation dollars, particularly relating to transit. Many of our federal transportation formulas do not prioritize large, high-ridership systems, and in some cases it does not adequately reward those who are often doing the right thing, both by maintaining systems as best they can and by raising their own revenue to meet their challenges. For example, New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority has seen its share of these programs decline over the past decade, even as pre-COVID ridership has greatly increased. As a legacy system that serves millions of people per day, more than any other in the country, the MTA's needs are unmatched, and while we do our part in New York to ensure the MTA gets the funding it needs, we very much believe it no longer receives the fair share that it deserves. I remain very grateful to the committee for its help in providing urgent COVID-19 relief to the MTA to address the short-term financial issues resulting from the pandemic, but I believe the committee must look to long-term changes that will ensure good actors in the public transit space can continue to meet the needs of the millions of Americans they serve.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to testify and for considering these priorities. I am also very grateful to you for taking the important step of allowing members to provide project-specific requests to the committee. This restoration of the "power of the purse" is a critical step to ensuring individual members can use their knowledge of their own districts to prioritize their constituents' needs. I look forward to working with you on my requests as well as the important issues outlined above.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much for that testimony.

And now, just so that everybody is ready, I want to preview the next three Members who will be presenting. We will go to Mr. Cicilline first, Ms. Sherrill, and then Ms. Barragán.

So I will now yield 5 minutes to Congressman Cicilline.

TESTIMONY OF HON. DAVID N. CICILLINE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF RHODE ISLAND

Mr. CICILLINE. Thank you very much. And I want to thank Chairman DeFazio for inviting me to share my thoughts with you as the committee works to reauthorize the surface transportation programs, and to pass President Biden's American Jobs Plan.

My home State of Rhode Island ranks 49th in the Nation for infrastructure conditions and has the highest rate of structurally deficient bridges in the country. These challenges present an urgent need to repair and rebuild our roads, bridges, ports, and transit systems to create jobs, invest in local economies, and enhance the safety of our communities.

As you continue to develop legislation to address transportation and infrastructure needs, it is my hope that you will consider the following priorities.

First, studies have found that use of innovative materials is cost effective and provides lasting durability when compared to conventional materials. I introduced the IMAGINE Act, which would encourage research and deployment of innovative construction materials in transportation projects nationwide. Investing in new techniques and materials could help extend the life of critical public works that draw increasingly poor condition ratings. I urge the

committee to support the bipartisan and bicameral solution to our Nation's infrastructure needs.

Second, 4.1 million Americans are served by sewage treatment plants that provide less than secondary treatment, a basic requirement of Federal law. Unfortunately, the financial burden to meet Federal requirements often falls on State and local governments that cannot shoulder the cost of facility maintenance and upgrades. In fact, only 37 percent of the Nation's infrastructure capital investment needs were met in 2019. This is unacceptable. I urge the committee to establish a new grant program that specifically addresses the needs of wastewater infrastructure in financially distressed municipalities. All Americans should have access to safe and clean drinking water.

Third, the National Scenic Byways Program brings economic development and tourism to communities by recognizing historic, scenic, and culturally important roads around the country. The passage of the Reviving America's Scenic Byways Act led to the designation of 49 new National Scenic Byways earlier this year. I support \$55 million in funding for the program, and the creation of a quality assistance program to provide technical assistance, and help designees continue to meet the criteria of the program.

Fourth, I recently introduced legislation that will further support the activities laid out in President Biden's American Jobs Plan throughout southern New England. The Southern New England Regional Commission Act would allow communities in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to utilize Federal resources to invest in economic improvements through a number of areas, such as defense and maritime manufacturing, and better utilize innovative materials in public transit programs. With aging infrastructure and unemployment rates above the national average, these States urgently need the economic revitalization this commission will provide.

Not to be forgotten, our Nation's community centers need our support. From senior centers to recreation facilities to organizations that offer programming for all ages, community centers come in many forms. However, they all provide Americans with opportunities to learn, socialize, and access key services. Congress should harness these engines of good by investing in facility acquisition and programming.

Finally, robust investments in coastal resiliency and broadband access will bring our Nation's infrastructure into the 21st century. By 2050 rising sea levels will cause the land currently occupied by 300 million people to flood at least once a year. We must build and retrofit infrastructure capable of withstanding the rising waters, more intense and more frequent storms brought on by climate change.

Internet access is essential to complete homework, look for a job, and communicate with others. Yet 44 million U.S. households do not have a standard broadband connection. Investments in high-speed broadband will end the isolation facing millions of Americans, create more jobs, and help strengthen our economy.

We have the opportunity to pass the once-in-a-generation infrastructure package that will stabilize and modernize the Nation's economy, and put millions of people to work. We must invest in in-

novative materials, expand access to clean water, support historic roads, address each region's unique needs, combat climate change, and expand access to broadband. And thank you for your continued work on these vital issues, and I appreciate your consideration. I look forward to working with the committee, and I thank you for this opportunity.

[Mr. Cicilline's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. David N. Cicilline, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Rhode Island**

Chairman DeFazio, thank you for inviting me to share my thoughts with you as the committee works to reauthorize surface transportation programs and pass President Biden's American Jobs Plan.

My home state of Rhode Island ranks 49th in the nation for infrastructure conditions and has the highest rate of structurally deficient bridges in the country. These challenges present an urgent need to repair and rebuild our roads, bridges, ports, and transit systems to create jobs, invest in local economies, and enhance the safety of our citizens.

As you continue to develop legislation to address our transportation and infrastructure needs, it is my hope that you will consider including the following priorities.

First, studies have found that use of innovative materials is cost effective and provides long lasting durability when compared to conventional materials. I introduced the IMAGINE Act, which would encourage research and deployment of innovative construction materials in transportation projects nationwide.

Investing in new techniques and materials could help extend the life of critical public works that draw increasingly poor condition ratings. I urge the committee to support this bipartisan and bicameral solution to our nation's infrastructure needs.

Second, 4.1 million Americans are served by sewage treatment plants that provide less than secondary treatment, a basic requirement by federal law.

Unfortunately, the financial burden to meet federal requirements often falls on state and local governments that cannot shoulder the cost of facility maintenance and upgrades. In fact, only 37% of the nation's infrastructure capital investment needs were met in 2019. This is unacceptable.

I urge the committee to establish a new grant program that specifically addresses the needs of wastewater infrastructure in financially distressed municipalities. All Americans should have access to safe and clean water.

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The Southern New England Regional Commission Act would allow communities in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut to utilize federal resources to invest in economic improvements through a number of areas such as defense and maritime manufacturing, and better utilize innovative materials in public transit programs.

With aging infrastructure and unemployment rates above the national average, these states urgently need the economic revitalization this commission will provide.

Not to be forgotten, our nations community centers need our support.

From senior centers to recreation facilities to organizations that offer programming for all-ages, community centers come in many forms. However, they all provide Americans with opportunities to learn, socialize, and access key services. Congress should harness these engines of good by investing in facility acquisition and programming.

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Internet access is essential complete homework, look for a job, and communicate with others. Yet, 44 million U.S. households do not have a standard broadband connection. Investments in high-speed broadband will end the isolation facing millions of disconnected Americans, create more jobs, and strengthen the economy.

We have the opportunity to pass once in a generation infrastructure packages that will stabilize and modernize the nation's economy and put millions of Americans to work. We must invest in innovative materials, expand access to clean water, support historic roads, address each region's unique needs, combat climate change, and expand access to broadband.

I thank you for your continued advocacy on these vital issues and appreciate your consideration. I look forward to working together.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Cicilline.

I now yield 5 minutes to my colleague from New Jersey, Congresswoman Sherrill.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MIKIE SHERRILL, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Ms. SHERRILL. OK, thank you, Mr. Chair. It is wonderful to be here. Thank you to Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the committee, and thank you so much to my good friend, Tom Malinowski, for all his continuous and hard work on this committee, and on particularly the Gateway Tunnel project. Thanks to two representatives, Payne and Sires, for their outstanding work to support New Jersey's priorities on this committee.

I want to speak today about an issue that is critical to my district's economy and the quality of life of my constituents: the Gateway Tunnel project. The Gateway is not just a local or regional issue. It is critically important to the entire Nation's transportation network and economic health.

The Northeast Corridor is the most heavily trafficked rail corridor in the Nation, and is essential to the travel of almost 1 million people every single day. Gateway is the linchpin at the center of that system. But the Hudson River tunnel it currently relies on is now over a century old, and was severely damaged during Superstorm Sandy, creating the risk for a devastating shutdown. According to a 2019 impact study, such a shutdown would cost the U.S. economy \$16 billion over 4 years, reduce property values by \$22 billion in New Jersey alone, and cost \$7 billion in lost revenue to all levels of our government.

A shutdown means more pollution, longer commutes, and increased motor vehicle accidents, further harming the single most economically productive region in our country. It also means the increased stress when a parent is contending with a delayed train while trying to pick up kids from daycare or make it home to a soccer game.

I have personally examined the damage to the tunnels and saw the exposed rebar, crumbling walls, and corroded wires left by the hurricane. Maintenance crews are able to do basic upkeep for a few hours, but it is simply not enough to fix the underlying damage. We have already delayed a structural fix for years and allowed the tunnel to continue to deteriorate. We simply can't afford to wait any longer while hoping a shutdown doesn't occur.

The Gateway Tunnel project would modernize and improve the Northeast Corridor system and minimize the risk of this potentially catastrophic failure. It would be a transformative infrastructure improvement for the Nation's busiest rail corridor and would create significant resiliency and efficiency improvements for the entire Northeast Corridor. That is why I have worked so hard since my first day in office to expedite the funding and approvals needed to finally implement this project.

This hasn't been easy over the past few years. The previous administration was an active impediment in our efforts to finish the project. They continually missed deadlines for approving the project, leading to heavy delays in planning and construction that put our regional economy at even greater risk.

I was thrilled to hear Transportation Secretary Buttigieg echo my priorities when he expressed his desire to move forward with Gateway during his Senate confirmation hearings. And the Biden administration recently announced that they will be moving forward with the approval process for the Gateway Tunnel project.

Furthermore, the administration's infrastructure proposal includes \$80 billion for passenger rail, with a specific set-aside for Amtrak's Northeast Corridor, as well as \$25 billion for complex projects of regional and national significance. Both of these provisions could provide the financing that we critically need to complete Gateway.

The funding strongly aligns with the priorities that this committee outlined through its landmark infrastructure reform package, the Moving Forward Act. I was so proud to vote for that bill last year because it recognized the necessity of upgrading and modernizing our rail system. And I want to thank the committee for all of the work that you put into crafting that legislation.

The Moving Forward Act contains several funding provisions that could be used to support the completion of Gateway. This included \$29 billion for Amtrak, with \$13 billion going to the Northeast Corridor; \$19 billion for the Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization and Expansion, the PRIME grant program; \$9 billion for the Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program; and \$7 billion for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grants program.

As Congress begins negotiations for this infrastructure package, therefore, I urge you to prioritize capital financing for major projects that are significant to the entire Nation, such as Gateway. The new Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program and the Moving Forward Act is exactly the type of fund that Gateway needs. And that program is remarkably similar to the \$25 billion included in President Biden's proposal for ambitious projects with benefits to the regional or national economy, but that are too large or complex for existing funding programs.

It is my hope that this new funding from Congress, alongside the administration's strong willingness to take Gateway to the finish line on the regulatory side, will enable us to finish this long overdue and desperately needed project. At a time when the Northeast region is still in the early stages of our economic recovery after being the first States hit by the pandemic, this project will create

thousands of jobs, and create significant new efficiencies that will help to power our economic recovery.

I am so appreciative of the tremendous leadership that this committee has demonstrated in support of Gateway over the past 3 years and look forward to engaging with all of you on this critical issue. This is an issue that is central to so many families and businesses in my district, and I will continue to advocate for them until we have completed Gateway.

So thank you so much, Mr. Chairman Malinowski, and I yield back.

[Ms. Sherrill's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mikie Sherrill, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New Jersey**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee for providing me the opportunity to testify today. I also want to thank my good friends and colleagues from New Jersey, Reps. Malinowski, Payne, and Sires, for their outstanding work to support our state's priorities on this Committee.

I want to speak today about an issue that is critical to my district's economy and the quality of life of my constituents—the Gateway Tunnel Project. But Gateway is not just a local or regional issue, it is critically important to the entire nation's transportation network and economic health. The Northeast Corridor is the most heavily trafficked rail corridor in the nation and is essential to the travel of almost a million people every day. Gateway is the linchpin at the center of that system. But the Hudson River tunnel it currently relies on is now over a century old and was severely damaged during Superstorm Sandy, creating the risk for a devastating shutdown.

According to a 2019 impact study, such a shutdown would cost the US economy \$16 billion over 4 years, reduce property values by \$22 billion in New Jersey alone, and cost \$7 billion in lost revenue to all levels of our government. A shutdown means more pollution, longer commutes, and increased motor vehicle accidents—further harming the single most economically productive region in our country.

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ing and modernizing our rail system, and I want to thank the Committee for all of the work that you put into crafting that legislation. The Moving Forward Act contained several funding provisions that could be used to support the completion of Gateway. This included \$29 billion for Amtrak (with \$13 billion going to the Northeast Corridor), \$19 billion for the Passenger Rail Improvement, Modernization, and Expansion (PRIME) grant program, \$9 billion for the Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program, and \$7 billion for the Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) grant program.

As Congress begins negotiations over this infrastructure package, therefore, I urge you to prioritize capital financing for major projects that are significant to the entire nation, such as Gateway. The new Projects of National and Regional Significance grant program in the Moving Forward Act is exactly the type of fund that Gateway needs, and that program is remarkably similar to the \$25 billion included in President Biden's proposal for ambitious projects with benefits to the regional or national economy, but that are too large or complex for existing funding programs.

It is my hope that this new funding from Congress, alongside the Administration's strong willingness to take Gateway to the finish line on the regulatory side, will enable us to finish this long overdue and desperately needed project. At a time when the northeast region is still in the early stages of our economic recovery after being the first states hit by the pandemic, this project will create thousands of jobs and create significant new efficiencies that will help to power our economic recovery.

I am so appreciative of the tremendous leadership that this Committee has demonstrated in support of Gateway over the past three years, and look forward to engaging with all of you on this critical issue. This is an issue that is central to so many families and businesses in my district, and I will continue to advocate for them until we have completed Gateway.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Congresswoman Sherrill.

In New Jersey, when we say there is light at the end of the tunnel, we mean that literally. I think it is safe to say that the Gateway is on track, but we will all work together to make sure that it actually does happen. So thank you again for your testimony.

I now yield 5 minutes to Congresswoman Barragán of California.

TESTIMONY OF HON. NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all the members of the committee for the opportunity to testify today. There are four main priorities I want to outline for you that will infuse equity and climate justice into our Nation's transportation system.

The first is to provide funding parity for transit. Currently, transit receives about 20 percent of Federal funding, and highways receive 80 percent. Greater investment in transit is important for reducing air pollution and supporting people who rely on transit for commuting to work, medical appointments, and the grocery store. I am asking for you to provide at least 50 percent of Federal resurfacing authorization funding for transit.

This need is significant. Transit systems, including L.A. Metro, are recovering from major declines in ridership caused by the pandemic, and significant capital project backlogs. L.A. Metro faces needs of \$5.5 billion for maintaining and upgrading bus and rail vehicles, facilities, and rail lines over the next 15 years. Their plan to address this need heavily relies on future Federal assistance.

Secondly, zero-emissions transit vehicles. As part of an increased investment in transit, the committee should increase funding for replacing diesel-burning transit vehicles with zero-emissions technology. Currently, the city of Los Angeles has a goal of

transitioning its entire bus fleet to zero emissions by 2030. This is critical for reducing transportation pollution from burning diesel, which causes dangerous air pollution in my district and communities of color throughout the country.

The Biden administration's infrastructure plan includes replacing 50,000 transit vehicles with zero-emissions vehicles by 2030. This is a great start, but the committee should go as big as possible. There are over 180,000 public transit vehicles available in our country for service.

Third, as part of your investments to reduce our dependency on cars, we need greater Federal support for biking and walking infrastructure. My district lacks safe pedestrian and cyclist access to parks and open spaces, particularly for communities along the lower Los Angeles River.

For example, the predominantly low-income communities living in the neighborhoods along Artesia Boulevard, the major west-to-east corridor running through North Long Beach and across the river, cannot access the river's bike path through Artesia Boulevard.

Finally, ports infrastructure grants program. I am requesting greater investment in ports through the Port Infrastructure Development Program. This is the primary Federal source of funding for strengthening and modernizing port terminals and their integration into the American supply chain. The last year has demonstrated the importance of strengthening and protecting the supply chain from disruption. The Port of Los Angeles alone faces a \$260 million gap between infrastructure needs and budgeted funding for construction.

And with that I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to working with you in the 117th Congress to advance 21st-century transportation solutions that improve the quality of life in our communities and address the climate crisis.

Thank you, and I yield back.

[Ms. Barragán's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Nanette Diaz Barragán, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for providing members with an opportunity to testify on our priorities for the reauthorization of the surface transportation program. There are four main priorities I want to outline for you that will infuse equity and climate justice into our nation's transportation system.

MORE TRANSIT FUNDING

The first is to provide funding parity for transit. Currently, transit receives about twenty percent of federal funding, and highways receive eighty percent. Greater investment in transit is important for reducing air pollution and supporting people who rely on transit for commuting to work, medical appointments, and the grocery store. I am asking for you to provide at least fifty percent of federal resurfacing authorization funding for transit.

The need is significant. Transit systems including LA Metro are recovering from major declines in ridership caused by the pandemic and significant capital project backlogs. LA Metro faces needs of \$5.5 billion for maintaining and upgrading bus and rail vehicles, facilities, and rail lines over the next 15 years. Their plan to address meet this need relies heavily on future federal assistance.

ZERO EMISSIONS TRANSIT VEHICLES

As part of an increased investment in transit, the committee should increase funding for replacing diesel burning transit vehicles with zero emissions technology. Currently the city of Los Angeles has a goal of transitioning its entire bus fleet to zero emissions by 2030. This is critical for reducing transportation pollution from burning diesel, which causes dangerous air pollution in my district and communities of color throughout the country.

The Biden Administration's infrastructure plan includes replacing 50,000 transit vehicles with zero emission vehicles by 2030. This is a great start, but the committee should go as big as possible. There are over 180,000 public transit vehicles available in our country for service.

GREATER FUNDING FOR BIKING/WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE

Third, as part of your investments to reduce our dependency on cars, we need greater federal support for biking and walking infrastructure. My district lacks safe pedestrian and cyclist access to parks and open spaces, particularly for communities along the lower Los Angeles River.

For example, the predominantly low-income communities living in the neighborhoods along Artesia Boulevard, the major west to east corridor running through North Long Beach and across the river, cannot access the river's bike path through Artesia Boulevard.

PORTS INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM

Finally, I am requesting greater investment in ports through the Ports Infrastructure Development Program. This is the primary federal source of funding for strengthening and modernizing port terminals and their integration into the American supply chain. The last year has demonstrated the importance of strengthening and protecting the supply chain from disruption.

The Port of Los Angeles alone faces a \$260 million gap between infrastructure needs and budgeted funding for construction.

CLOSING

Thank you again for taking my priorities into consideration. I look forward to working with you in the 117th Congress to advance 21st century transportation solutions that improve the quality of life in our communities and address the climate crisis.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much.

I now yield 5 minutes to Mr. Jones of New York.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MONDAIRE JONES, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. JONES. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman and Ranking Member Graves and members of the committee, for the opportunity to appear before you and to share my testimony. It is a great honor to speak to you today about the district where I grew up and now represent in the United States Congress.

There is no shortage of transportation and infrastructure needs in Westchester and Rockland Counties, suburbs of New York City that are in New York's 17th Congressional District. As you know, surface transportation across New York State is notoriously in bad shape, and nearly half of all locally or State-maintained roads in New York are in poor or mediocre condition, according to a study by the national transportation research nonprofit known as TRIP.

Similarly, many of our bridges are old and in need of repair. In fact, nearly 10 percent of all bridges in the State of New York were determined to be structurally deficient, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers. That number should be zero.

But this is all information you can easily find and will likely hear from my colleagues in the New York delegation. I am here because I want to talk to you about something you may not know, something that is a high priority for many of my constituents in Rockland County, which is the more underresourced portion of my congressional district, and it happens to be where I grew up. And that is the need for improved commuter rail from Rockland County into New York City.

The Hudson River runs through the middle of my district, with Rockland County on the west bank of the river, and Westchester County on the east bank of the river. I grew up in Rockland, and since I was a child, I can remember people talking about the need for a one-seat train ride into New York City. Currently, Rocklanders going into New York City must take New Jersey Transit into the State of New Jersey, then transfer to a different train station at Secaucus Junction in New Jersey, before finally getting to New York Penn Station. This is deeply inconvenient and makes Rockland a less attractive place to live for working families.

Contrast that with the experience of my constituents in Westchester, who live on the other side of the Hudson River, and ride to and from our Nation's economic capital, New York City, every day on the Metro-North Railroad without ever having to transfer to a different train. The one-seat ride to the city has helped Westchester prosper, and has encouraged transit-oriented sustainable development. Unfortunately, the same can't be said about rail service in Rockland County.

As an initial matter, in most parts of Rockland, which has over 325,000 residents, there is no train service. And that means you have to drive or take a bus to get into New York City, both of which are bad for the environment. Rockland's challenge of too few rail stations is compounded by a lack of direct service to New York City, which operates to deny Rocklanders the same benefits as their more affluent neighbors in Westchester County.

In researching this issue I have found that completion of the Gateway program is key to delivering a one-seat ride between Rockland County and New York Penn Station. Several of the projects that comprise the Gateway program have a direct impact on my goal of securing a one-seat ride for Rocklanders. Chief among them are two projects that are underway.

First, the new Hudson River tunnel, which will expand railroad capacity, improve safety, and reduce delays currently impacting service into New York City.

And the second is the expansion of New York Penn Station, which will be necessary to accommodate the increased train capacity resulting from a new Hudson River tunnel. I am confident that, with this new administration, and support from Congress, these projects will be built without further delay.

My concern is about what comes next. In order to secure a one-seat ride for my constituents in Rockland, the next piece of the Gateway program that must come into place is completion of the Bergen Loop project, also known as the Secaucus Loop. If built, the Bergen Loop will create a pathway for the one-seat ride that Rockland County needs. Passengers will no longer have to transfer at Secaucus and wait for another train that heads into the city.

With robust funding in the surface transportation reauthorization bill for major infrastructure projects like Gateway, we can make the one-seat ride from Rockland to New York City a reality. This is of the utmost importance to me and to the hundreds of thousands of my constituents who deserve reliable and convenient access to economic opportunities in the city.

And so I urge the committee to provide strong funding and resources to complete infrastructure Projects of National and Regional Significance, including the Gateway program. Thank you very much, and I yield back.

[Mr. Jones' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mondaire Jones, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee, for the opportunity to appear before you and share my testimony. It is a great honor to speak to you today about the district where I grew up and now represent in the United States Congress.

There is no shortage of transportation and infrastructure needs in Westchester and Rockland Counties, suburbs of New York City that are in New York's 17th Congressional District. As you know, surface transportation across New York State is notoriously in bad shape. Nearly half of all locally or state-maintained roads in New York are in poor or mediocre condition, according to a study by the national transportation research nonprofit known as TRIP.¹

Similarly, many of our bridges are old and in need of repair. In fact, nearly 10 percent of all bridges in the State of New York were determined to be structurally deficient, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers.² That number should be zero.

But this is all information you can find easily and will likely hear from my colleagues in the New York delegation. I am here because I want to talk with you about something you may not know, something that is a high priority for many of my constituents in Rockland County, which is the more under-resourced portion of my district and where I grew up. And that is the need for improved commuter rail from Rockland County to New York City.

The Hudson River runs through the middle of my district, with Rockland County on the west bank of the river and Westchester County on the east bank of the river. I grew up in Rockland County and since I was a child, I can remember people talking about the need for a one-seat train ride to New York City.

Currently, Rocklanders going into New York City must take New Jersey Transit into the State of New Jersey, then transfer to a different train at the Secaucus Junction station in New Jersey before finally getting to New York-Penn Station.

This is deeply inconvenient and makes Rockland a less attractive place to live for working families. Contrast that with my constituents in Westchester County, who live on the other side of the Hudson River and ride to and from our nation's economic capital, New York City, every day on the Metro-North Railroad without ever having to transfer to a different train.

The one-seat ride to the city has helped Westchester County prosper and has encouraged transit-oriented sustainable development. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said about rail service in Rockland County. As an initial matter, in most parts of Rockland County, which has over 325,000 residents, there is no train service. That means, in most parts of Rockland, you have to drive or take a bus to get into New York City, both of which are bad for the environment. I can also tell you from firsthand experience that bus service in Rockland is unreliable, which can be devastating when you depend on it to get to work.

¹"New York Transportation by the Numbers: Meeting the State's Need for Safe, Smooth, and Efficient Mobility," TRIP: A National Transportation Research Nonprofit, December 2020, https://tripnet.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/TRIP_New_York_Transportation_by_the_Numbers_Report_December_2020.pdf

²"2021 Report Card for America's Infrastructure: New York Infrastructure Overview," American Society of Civil Engineers, accessed April 10, 2021, <https://infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/new-york/>

Rockland's challenge of too few rail stations is compounded by a lack of direct service to New York City, which operates to deny Rocklanders the same benefits as their more affluent neighbors in Westchester.

People in suburban communities benefit from convenient, reliable public transportation to urban areas. It allows them the ability to move to more affordable neighborhoods while maintaining access to the economic opportunities in the city. This is evident in Westchester County, where the one-seat ride makes it easy to get off the roads and commute by train. And that is what my constituents in Rockland deserve.

In researching this issue, I have found that completion of the Gateway Program is key to delivering a one-seat ride between Rockland County and New York-Penn Station. Several of the projects that comprise the Gateway Program have a direct impact on my goal of securing a one-seat ride for Rocklanders.

Chief among them are two projects that are underway. First, the new Hudson River tunnel, which will help expand rail capacity, improve safety, and reduce delays currently impacting service into New York City.

Second is the expansion of New York-Penn Station, which will be necessary to accommodate the increased train capacity resulting from the new Hudson River tunnel. I am confident that with this new administration and support from Congress, these projects will be built without further delay.

My concern is about what comes next. In order to secure a one-seat ride for my constituents in Rockland County, the next piece of the Gateway Program that must come into place is completion of the Bergen Loop project, also known as the Secaucus Loop. If built, the Bergen Loop will create a pathway for the one-seat ride that Rockland County needs. Passengers will no longer have to transfer at Secaucus Station and wait for another train that heads into the city.

With robust funding in the Surface Transportation Reauthorization bill for major infrastructure projects like Gateway, we can make the one-seat ride from Rockland to New York City a reality. This is of the utmost importance to me and to the hundreds of thousands of my constituents who deserve convenient and reliable access to economic opportunities in the city.

As Congress considers legislation to build and improve our infrastructure for a more sustainable future, commuter rail must be an important part of the conversation. I strongly believe that we must invest in commuter rail to improve existing service and expand it for those who lack access.

I urge the committee to provide strong funding and resources to complete infrastructure projects of national and regional significance, including the Gateway Program, so that Rockland County and communities like it can enjoy convenient and reliable access to economic opportunities in the city.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Mr. Jones. And you are absolutely right. There is no way we get a one-seat ride for any number of commuter railways west of the Hudson River without completing the new Hudson tunnel, and repairing the old one. And it is good to be reminded it is not just New Jersey that is involved here.

I yield 5 minutes to Congresswoman Leger Fernandez.

TESTIMONY OF HON. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO

Ms. LEGER FERNANDEZ. Thank you so very much, and thank you for holding this hearing to listen to Members' ideas as we enact a bold infrastructure plan.

We are in a transformative moment as we climb out of the recession, address the climate crisis, and build a better, more equitable future. New Mexico needs infrastructure investments that will create a foundation for our communities to thrive. It is estimated that deficient roads in New Mexico cost each driver \$767 per year. My State schools face an over \$400 million capital expenditure gap. We will need \$1.4 billion to meet drinking water needs.

But New Mexico is also ground zero for the potential for bold climate action, and also the potential for economic disaster if we are

not careful about the transition into a green economy. Our ecosystem is fragile, and a warmer planet could mean extensive droughts and wildfires that will threaten the beautiful State we call home.

But we must also transition with an understanding of the potential harm to the communities that depend on jobs and tax revenue. This is an issue affecting many communities, not just New Mexico.

We can start with connecting our rural and underserved communities to economic opportunity. I urge the committee to prioritize funding for transportation infrastructure that specifically connects economies transitioning away from oil and gas to existing railroads and transportation networks.

For example, Farmington, New Mexico, which is in the San Juan gas basin, is connected by oil and gas pipelines to the rest of the economy, but lacks access to a commercial rail line, which they desperately want so that they can move into the new future. A new electric rail line there could become a prototype for rail innovation, while spurring the just transition.

Nowhere are transportation and infrastructure needs more apparent than in our Tribal communities. Whether it is the lack of running water and plumbing, or inadequate roads to take elders to health facilities, COVID-19 has exposed the deep infrastructure inequities that Tribal communities face. Navajo children can't ride the bus sometimes because bridges and roads are too deteriorated for the buses. The Navajo Nation recently reported \$7.9 billion is required to address its infrastructure needs alone. According to the GAO, there are over 150,000 miles of roads and Tribal lands in the United States. Over half are unpaved and in poor condition.

I was counsel to numerous Tribes and their entities, and I have seen the devastating impacts of underinvestment that led to COVID deaths and despair. Now, as the chair of the Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States, I want to highlight our Federal Government's unique trust obligation to Tribes. As you evaluate Member-designated project submissions, I urge the committee to honor this trust responsibility, and consider granting Members additional funding for projects submitted by Tribal governments.

Now I want to address building back beautiful. Arts and culture are an essential part of American infrastructure and can help unite the country and allow every story to be celebrated as the American story. That is why New Mexico invests in the creative economy with 1 percent for the arts set aside in every publicly funded project, 1 percent set aside. The creative economy in New Mexico, therefore, represents about 10 percent of the paychecks in our State.

Our Federal Government recognized the value of arts and culture after the Depression, when we created the WPA to employ muralists and other creative workers whose art still inspires us. Today, when our Nation is so divided, we desperately need to be reminded of our cultures, our shared experiences, and what binds us together as Americans. Similar to New Mexico's 1 percent for the arts funding, I encourage setting aside a small percentage of each infrastructure project for use in creative programs in the locale of the spending. We need to put musicians, playwrights,

muralists, and poets back to work to help rebuild and heal our Nation.

We must build back beautiful. As Amanda Gorman said at the inauguration, “Being American is more than a pride we inherit, it’s the past we step into and how we repair it.”

Thank you again to the chair and ranking member of the committee. I look forward to working together to achieve these critical investments.

I yield back.

[Ms. Leger Fernandez’s prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Teresa Leger Fernandez, a Representative in Congress from the State of New Mexico

Good morning and thank you Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for holding this hearing.

I appreciate this Committee’s commitment to enact a bold infrastructure plan in this transformative historic moment as we climb out of a recession, address the climate crisis, and build a better, more equitable future. Like many states throughout the country, New Mexico needs infrastructure investments that will create the foundation for our communities to thrive. In fact, according to the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), deficient roads in New Mexico cost each driver \$767 per year and the State’s schools face an over \$400 million capital expenditure gap. ASCE also estimates that the State will need \$1.4 billion to meet drinking water infrastructure needs. Although today’s Committee hearing is focused on surface transportation reauthorization legislation, I urge the Committee to consider an expansive view of infrastructure so we can help New Mexicans and all Americans.

New Mexico is also ground zero for the potential for bold climate action and also the potential for economic disaster if we don’t transition with an understanding of the likely harm to the communities that have depended on fossil fuel development for both jobs and tax revenue. Our ecosystem is very fragile, and a warmer planet could mean extensive droughts and wildfires that threaten our very existence in the beautiful place we New Mexicans call home. As a result, connecting communities and promoting economic diversification, while also making strides toward a clean energy future, is crucial.

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

This starts with connecting our rural and underserved communities to economic opportunity. In addition to supporting funding and policy to address our deteriorating roads and bridges, I urge the Committee to direct funding to transportation infrastructure that specifically connects economies transitioning away from oil and gas to existing railroads and transportation networks. For example, Farmington, New Mexico is connected by oil and gas pipelines to the rest of the economy, but lacks access to a commercial rail line. This could become a prototype for rail innovation while spurring the just transition.

Nowhere are these kinds of transportation and infrastructure needs more apparent than in our tribal communities. Whether it’s the lack of running water and plumbing for tribal households, or inadequate roads to take elders to healthcare facilities, COVID-19 has exposed the deep infrastructure inequities that tribal communities face. For example, Navajo children often cannot ride the school bus because bridges and roads are deteriorated. In fact, the Navajo Nation recently reported \$7.9 billion is required to address its infrastructure needs alone. While COVID-19 displayed these unacceptable conditions, we know these problems are due to decades of underinvestment.

INVESTMENT IN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

I was Counsel to numerous Native American Tribes and their entities for 30 years and I have seen the devastating impacts of this underinvestment. Now, I am honored to serve as the Chair of the Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples. Our federal government has a unique trust obligation to Tribes. As you evaluate Member-designated project submissions, I urge the Committee to bear in mind this trust responsibility and consider granting Members additional funding for

projects submitted by Tribal governments and their entities within their districts. Tribal reservations are vast and in need of road improvement. According to the Government Accountability Office, there are over 150,000 miles of roads on Tribal lands, over half of which are unpaved and often in poor condition. In just my district, I have 16 federally recognized tribes, and the Jicarilla Apache Nation, alone, maintains about 700 miles of BIA and Tribal roads. As a result, it's past time we ramp up funding and support for the Tribal Transportation Program under the Department of Transportation as well as the Road Maintenance Program under the Bureau of Indian Affairs, just to name two programs.

And to be clear, tribal infrastructure needs extend well beyond roads and bridges. We must also invest in our drinking water systems, electricity sector, and broadband. We can make legitimate progress in all these areas, improving communities and enabling New Mexico's to take advantage of its enormous potential to be a leader in the clean energy economy.

A WPA FOR TODAY

In New Mexico, arts and culture are an essential part of American infrastructure and can help unite the country as we allow every story to be celebrated as the American story. The creative economy helps turn a town into a community. That is why our state invests in the creative economy with a 1 percent for the arts set aside in our publicly funded projects and the creative economy accounts for 10 percent of the jobs in the state. Our federal government recognized this value decades ago when it created the Works Progress Administration ("WPA") to employ, among others, muralists, photographers, and other creative workers whose beautiful creations during the depression inspire us today. In a time when our nation is so divided, we desperately need to be reminded of our cultures and shared experiences and what binds us together as Americans. I urge you to invest in the creative economy, like we did with the WPA, as we rebuild and reimagine our communities.

Similar to the 1 percent for the arts funding, I encourage setting aside a percentage of the infrastructure projects for use in creative projects in the locale of the spending. We need to put the musicians, playwrights, muralists and poets back to work to help rebuild and heal our nation. As Amanda Gorman said at your inauguration, "Being American is more than a pride we inherit, it's the past we step into and how we repair it."

Thank you again to the Chair and Ranking Member. I look forward to working together to achieve these critical investments.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so very much.

I now yield 5 minutes to Congressman Green of Texas.

TESTIMONY OF HON. AL GREEN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF TEXAS

Mr. GREEN. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. I greatly appreciate the opportunity to present some projects from my congressional district.

I would also like to thank Chairman DeFazio, as well as Ranking Member Graves, for this opportunity.

Mr. Chairman, we have many projects that we can call to your attention. And because there are so many, I am going to just quickly go through a good number of them.

We have a request from our Metropolitan Transit Authority, and this transit authority is requesting a project that would connect Missouri City, Texas, with the Texas Medical Center and downtown Houston through Metro's regional express network. This project would cost approximately \$50 million. The funds requested are \$5 million, and the timeline for completion would be 3 to 4 years.

We have the Westchase District project. This project, the purpose of which would be to change the roads in the district, and improve transportation access and options for residents, and improve multimodal safety in the region. The proposed changes to the

stormwater system, sewage system, and water lines would improve flood management in the future. It would take about 8 months to break ground, and about 18 months thereafter to complete the project. The estimated cost is \$20.35 million, we are requesting \$4 million.

The Sharpstown Trail Project has many phases to it. I believe that parks, whenever possible, should be made available to persons who don't always have the opportunity to visit parks. This area is 66 percent low-income, and 60 percent Latinx. My hope is that, with this project, we can turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses. The approximate cost is \$2.8 million. The funds requested are \$1 million.

We have a similar project that is called phase 2, and it has a cost of \$1.75 million, funds requested \$1.4 million.

A similar project is in the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail area, and this project would turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses. This would benefit an area that is 71 percent Hispanic and 20.7 percent African American. The total estimated cost, \$1.4 million. The funds requested, \$1 million.

Finally, in terms of the trails, we have a phase 2 of the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail, and this project would cost about \$11 million, the funds requested, \$5 million.

All of the things that I am calling to your attention are highlighted in my written document that has been submitted.

Then we have the Hill at Sims. This is requested by the Houston Parks Board. This is a request by the board that wants to turn the Hill at Sims, a 100-acre regional detention basin, into a public park. This project is important, because it would serve approximately 1,773 people within a 10-minute walk and, hopefully, it would be completed by the end of 2022.

We have the Mustang Bayou Flood Control Center. This project has to do with flood control. It is estimated that in Fort Bend County, 43 percent of the properties are at risk of flooding. The project will dramatically improve the safety and economy of the region. The cost for this project is \$23,640,000, and the request is for the entire amount to help us with the flooding in Houston.

There is another section of this same project that would provide similar help, in terms of eliminating flooding and preventing it, to the extent that we can. And it would be a \$16,092,000 request.

So on now to the final project, which is the Legacy Community Health Transportation Support Program. This is an FQHC, and the FQHC would like to provide support by helping persons who are in need of medical care to have a means by which they can get to the FQHC. It is a ride project. The total estimated cost is \$50,000, and the funds requested are \$50,000.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that a good many of these projects are absolutely beneficial. In fact, all of them would be beneficial to the people that I serve. And I am hopeful that, if there are exceptions to rules, that we might fall into some exceptions for some of these projects. I do understand that there are certain rules that we have to adhere to.

But I thank you for the opportunity to present these projects and look forward to working with you not only on these projects, but

on the many other projects that have been called to your attention today. I have been really impressed with the needs that we have, and want to do what I can to meet not only the needs of the people of the Ninth Congressional District, but the needs of the people across the length and breadth of our country.

I thank you, and I will yield back any time that I have left.

[Mr. Green's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Al Green, a Representative in Congress from the State of Texas

Dear Chairman DeFazio, thank you for receiving the attached information and providing me with the opportunity to testify before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for Members' Day Hearing. Attached you will find a list of projects that I desire to submit as of Monday, April 12, 2021. I request you to consider these projects as you work to reauthorize surface transportation programs.

Should you have any additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact my Chief of Staff.

MISSOURI CITY/BELT WAY 8 TRANSIT FACILITY

- **REQUESTING ENTITY:**
 - Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO)
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - METRO requests funding for the first phase of a project to provide a new commuter bus service between the Texas Medical Center (TMC) and Missouri City.
 - A new facility will be located near US 90A and BW8, which will include a bus platform for both regional express and local buses, as well as parking for commuters.
 - The facility will eventually house a multi-story parking garage to support increased travel demand, capable of accommodating approximately 2,000 vehicles.
 - The facility will also have an end of line connection for the proposed METRORapid West Houston BRT Corridor line and the Gessner bus line.
 - The Gessner bus line is part of the BOOST Network, a program to improve speed, reliability, and access for 16 high-ridership, frequent bus routes.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - This project will connect Missouri City with TMC and Downtown Houston through METRO's regional express network.
 - The project will allow METRO to provide more service over its current levels.
 - The project will also improve connections between Fort Bend County and TMC and Downtown Houston.
 - This project will serve fast-growing portions of Harris County and Missouri City.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** This project was a component of the transit plan in our area that was the basis for a 2019 \$3.5 billion bond referendum. That referendum passed with almost 70 percent of the vote. The communities served by the specific project had even wider margins in favor than other areas.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$50M.
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$5M.
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** Local funding sources will be used as matching funds if necessary.
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Completion of this specific project will be about 3–4 years. The full "express service" corridor will take a few more years to complete.

WESTCHASE DISTRICT

- **REQUESTING ENTITY:**
 - Westchase District
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - The Westchase district is proposing the complete reconstruction of Meadowglen Lane from Woodland Park Drive to Rogerdale Road.

- The district wants to upgrade the storm water system (drainage), the sewer system, and existing water lines. The project will also provide dedicated bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities. These facilities either do not currently exist and/or are in substandard condition.
- The project will right-size the travel lanes to current standards, improving safety, while providing safe and accessible routes for bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit users. The project will provide drainage improvements consistent with post-Hurricane Harvey standards.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - The project is meant to benefit residents of the Westchase district:
 - District residents are above the regional average in terms of population density, percent minority households, households below the poverty line, households without cars, and households with limited English proficiency.
 - The proposed changes to the roads in the District will improve transportation access and options for residents and improve multimodal safety in the region.
 - The proposed changes to the storm water system, sewer system, and water lines will improve flood management in the future.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**
 - Outreach efforts have been conducted to get community input on the project.
 - There have been several community driven focus group meetings in which residents, employers, and developers have given their opinions
 - This project is also part of the West Houston Mobility study, which was an H-GAC funded effort.
 - This project also had a public input process throughout January–April 2015.
 - This process included a visioning workshop, an alternatives workshop, and an open house.
 - The project is identified in the Houston-Galveston Area Council 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)—this is the long-range federal transportation document for the region.
 - The project is supported by local and statewide elected officials and letters of support are on file.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$2.35M
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$4M
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** The District has funding available in its current capital improvement program to cover all costs outside of the federal request being made.
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Construction can break ground 8 months from funding approval. Construction completion will take approximately 18 months from that date.

SHARPSTOWN TRAIL (PHASE 1)

- **REQUESTING ENTITY:**
 - Houston Parks Board
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - The Houston Parks Board wants to build the Sharpstown Trail, a roughly 3-mile trail that could connect the Sharpstown neighborhood to the Westchase Trails in the north and Brays Bayou Greenway in the south.
 - This project proposal is for Phase 1 of the trail's construction, from Sands Point Drive to Beechnut Street—1.82 miles.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - The project would turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
 - The project will serve approximately 14,000 people within a 10-minute walk.
 - 66% are low income
 - 60% Hispanic
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**
 - The Sharpstown Trail project is community driven: members of the Sharpstown Civic Association have been advocating for the trail's construction for several years.
 - Multiple community meetings have been held throughout the trail's design process.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$2.8M
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$1M
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** \$1.8M match
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Construction estimated to be completed by the end of 2022.

SHARPSTOWN TRAIL (PHASE 2)

- REQUESTING ENTITY:
 - Houston Parks Board
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
 - The Houston Parks Board wants to build the Sharpstown Trail, a roughly 3-mile trail that could connect the Sharpstown neighborhood to the Westchase Trails in the north and Brays Bayou Greenway in the south.
 - This project proposal is for Phase 2 of the trail's construction, which would build .83 miles of the trail.
- WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:
 - Together with phase 1 of the trail, this project would turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
 - The project will serve approximately 14,000 people within a 10-minute walk.
 - 66% are low income
 - 60% Hispanic
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT:
 - The Sharpstown Trail project is community driven: members of the Sharpstown Civic Association have been advocating for the trail's construction for several years.
 - Multiple community meetings have been held throughout the trail's design process.
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$1.75M
- FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1.4M
- OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: \$350,000 match
- TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Construction estimated to take around 5 years.

BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY TRAIL (PHASE 1)

- REQUESTING ENTITY:
 - Houston Parks Board
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
 - The Houston Parks Board wants to expand the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail.
 - This project proposal is for Phase 1 of the trail's construction, which will fill in a .5-mile gap in the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail and connect the Braeburn Glen neighborhood's north and south sides.
- WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:
 - This project would turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
 - The project will serve approximately 6,300 people within a 10-minute walk.
 - Per capita income of the residents is \$14,124
 - 71% Hispanic
 - 20.7% Black alone
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT:
 - The Trail's Phase 1 design has been vetted by the community, including the Braeburn Glen Civic Association (the community which this trail runs through) and the Council Member's CIP meetings.
 - Multiple community meetings have been held throughout the trail's design process.
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$1.4M
- FUNDS REQUESTED: \$1M
- OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: \$400,000 match
- TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Construction estimated to be completed by the end of 2022.

BRAYS BAYOU GREENWAY TRAIL (PHASE 2)

- REQUESTING ENTITY:
 - Houston Parks Board
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
 - The Houston Parks Board wants to expand the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail.
 - This project proposal is for Phase 2 of the trail, which will create a 7-mile trail along Brays Bayou from I69 to Eldridge Road.
 - This trail will connect residential neighborhoods including Alief and the West Houston/West Oaks communities with the rest of the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail.
- WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:

- This project would turn an underutilized green space into a convenient path to neighborhoods, schools, and businesses.
- The project will serve approximately 50,488 people within a 10-minute walk.
 - Per capita income of the residents is \$18,083
 - 56.2% Hispanic
 - 22.7% Black alone
 - 13.9% Asian alone
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**
 - The Trail's Phase 2 design has been vetted by community and civic groups, including the Alief Super Neighborhood, the West Oaks Super Neighborhood, Brays Village HOA, Royal Oaks HOA, Shadowlakes HOA, and both Council Members' CIP meetings.
 - Brays Village HOA provided the land needed for the trail to the Houston Parks Board for \$1
 - Shadowlakes HOA and MUD 359 are providing funds to add additional connections through their community that will tie into the Brays Bayou Greenway Trail Phase 2.
 - Multiple community meetings have been held throughout the trail's design process.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$11M
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$5M
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** \$5.9M match
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Construction estimated to be completed by the end of 2023.

HILL AT SIMS

- **REQUESTING ENTITY:**
 - Houston Parks Board
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - The Houston Parks Board wants to turn the Hill at Sims, a 100-acre regional detention basin, into a public park.
 - Harris County Flood Control District owns the basin and the adjacent 150 acre property along Scott Street.
 - Together, these properties could form a new regional park in the Sunnyside/South Acres/Crestmont Park area of Houston.
 - The site is within walking distance of multiple schools, parks, churches, and neighborhoods.
 - The project will include a side path along Scott Street, and a trail around the detention basins, additional nature trails, water access, and trail amenities.
 - This project would connect the neighborhood to the Sims Bayou Greenway to the north.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - The project will serve approximately 1,773 people within a 10-minute walk.
 - 36% are low income, 22% are medium income
 - 78% of the residents are African American
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:**
 - Multiple community meetings about the project have been held throughout the planning process and will continue during the design process.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$1.4M
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$1M
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** \$400,000 match
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** End of 2022.

MUSTANG BAYOU FLOOD CONTROL (UPPER BAYOU SECTION)

- **REQUESTING ENTITY:**
 - Fort Bend County, TX
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - Fort Bend County hopes to build a flood control project for Mustang Bayou.
 - Currently, the Bayou is poorly drained; this project will provide drainage and flood control to a low-income area in the County.
 - The Mustang Bayou Flood Control Project is divided into three sections—this proposal is for the Upper Bayou section.
 - The project's three sections each address a section of the Mustang Bayou with a long history of flash flooding.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - An estimated 43% of properties in Fort Bend County are at risk of flooding.

- The area has long been a target of hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rains.
- The project will dramatically improve the safety and economy of the region, since flooding along the Bayou has been very damaging to local neighborhoods and businesses.
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT:
 - The community around the Mustang Bayou brought the issue of poor drainage and flood control to the Fort Bend County board, urging the board to prioritize the issue to prevent loss of life and improve residents' quality of life.
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$23,640,000.
- FUNDS REQUESTED: \$23,640,000.
- OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: Unspecified.
- TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Unspecified.

MUSTANG BAYOU FLOOD CONTROL (MIDDLE BAYOU SECTION)

- REQUESTING ENTITY:
 - Fort Bend County, TX
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
 - Fort Bend County hopes to build a flood control project for Mustang Bayou.
 - Currently, the Bayou is poorly drained; this project will provide drainage and flood control to a low-income area in the County.
 - The Mustang Bayou Flood Control Project is divided into three sections—this proposal is for the Middle Bayou section.
- WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:
 - An estimated 43% of properties in Fort Bend County are at risk of flooding.
 - The area has long been a target of hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rains.
 - The project will dramatically improve the safety and economy of the region, since flooding along the Bayou has been very damaging to local neighborhoods and businesses.
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT:
 - The community around the Mustang Bayou brought the issue of poor drainage and flood control to the Fort Bend County board, urging the board to prioritize the issue to prevent loss of life and improve residents' quality of life.
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$16,092,000.
- FUNDS REQUESTED: \$16,092,000.
- OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: Unspecified.
- TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Unspecified.

MUSTANG BAYOU FLOOD CONTROL (LOWER BAYOU SECTION)

- REQUESTING ENTITY:
 - Fort Bend County, TX
- PROJECT DESCRIPTION:
 - Fort Bend County hopes to build a flood control project for Mustang Bayou.
 - Currently, the Bayou is poorly drained; this project will provide drainage and flood control to a low-income area in the County.
 - The Mustang Bayou Flood Control Project is divided into three sections—this proposal is for the Lower Bayou section.
- WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:
 - An estimated 43% of properties in Fort Bend County are at risk of flooding.
 - The area has long been a target of hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rains.
 - The project will dramatically improve the safety and economy of the region, since flooding along the Bayou has been very damaging to local neighborhoods and businesses.
- COMMUNITY SUPPORT:
 - The community around the Mustang Bayou brought the issue of poor drainage and flood control to the Fort Bend County board, urging the board to prioritize the issue to prevent loss of life and improve residents' quality of life.
- TOTAL ESTIMATED COST: \$12,492,000.
- FUNDS REQUESTED: \$12,492,000.
- OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING: Unspecified.
- TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION: Unspecified.

LEGACY COMMUNITY HEALTH TRANSPORTATION SUPPORT PROGRAM

- REQUESTING ENTITY:

- Legacy Community Health of Houston
- **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**
 - Legacy Community Health hopes to expand its transportation support program for patients (the program currently serves four clinics).
 - This program gives rides to medical appointments and healthy food access sites, such as pantries, grocery stores, and WIC offices.
 - With the financial support of \$50,000, LCH can scale its transportation services to support additional clinic sites to serve patients.
- **WHY IS THIS PROJECT IMPORTANT:**
 - By providing this support, LCH could help address deep-rooted health disparities in the 9th district and evaluate the impact of access to healthy food and medical care on long-term health outcomes.
 - These include healthy birth weight, gestational diabetes, maternal mortality, and chronic disease prevention.
- **COMMUNITY SUPPORT:** Not specified.
- **TOTAL ESTIMATED COST:** \$50,000.
- **FUNDS REQUESTED:** \$50,000.
- **OTHER SOURCES OF FUNDING:** Unspecified.
- **TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Unspecified.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much. Just to preview, our next five Members will be Mr. Bowman, Ms. Underwood, Mr. Levin, Ms. Jayapal, and Ms. Craig, in that order.

So I will begin by yielding 5 minutes to Mr. Bowman of New York.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. JAMAAL BOWMAN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. BOWMAN. Thank you to Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify today.

When I launched my campaign for Congress, the first rally I attended in my district was at Co-Op City in the Bronx. This is the largest naturally occurring retirement community in the world, and the largest affordable housing development in the entire country. And the rally was about New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority reducing bus service to this incredible community.

As a new congressman, I fought successfully for a new COVID vaccination center at Co-Op City, because it was taking seniors an entire 2 hours via two trains and a bus to get to the closest mass vaccination site. All of this speaks to the discriminatory and inequitable distribution of transit needs in my district and across the country. Even in a city with the largest public transit system in the country.

The MTA's infrastructure needs are well known. With the Federal Government's help, they are seeking to invest over \$50 billion in the region's transit system over the next few years.

What if places like Co-Op City could be the flagships for a new, transformative approach to infrastructure?

What if transit-oriented development meant focusing on the well-being of our communities by expanding access to childcare, education, nature, and the arts?

We should be linking together innovative models of public and affordable housing like Co-Op City and other public services with extensive new transit networks, all of it fully accessible, and all of it zero carbon.

My district, New York's 16th, encompasses parts of Westchester County and the Bronx. Because of the way people's lives are intersected and invaded by highways, trucks, and polluting facilities,

the Bronx has some of the highest rates of asthma in the country. Within New York City, Bronx children are the most likely to be hospitalized by asthma. These burdens are a daily reality for many children: nationwide, 1 out of 11 public schools is located within 500 feet of a highway or truck route.

Fossil fuel pollution leads to roughly 350,000 premature deaths every year in the U.S., and Black people are exposed to particulate matter at 1.5 times the rate of the general population. Comorbidities linked to this pollution have made COVID even deadlier. And all of this is concentrated in red-line communities that face a variety of crises like undrinkable water or failing sewage systems. In the city of Mount Vernon in my district, aging pipes are regularly sending wastewater into people's homes.

Transit is a part of this larger infrastructure crisis. Getting from one side of my district to the other is a nightmare. Many people commute from Westchester into New York City for work, and this is extremely challenging for those who already struggle with the cost of housing and childcare. Some try to——

VOICE. Yes, they named them all. They didn't even name the——
Mr. BOWMAN. Please mute. Thank you.

Some try to lower the costs by avoiding the more expensive commuter rail system, which greatly increases their commute time. This leads to a horrible quality of life for many thousands of people.

Instead of bringing us together, our current transportation system keeps us apart. Prior Federal infrastructure investments like the Federal Highway Administration's work during urban renewal, destroyed Black and Brown communities in my district. Highways built during this time, like the Cross Bronx Expressway, remain physical barriers that separate my constituents from the resources they need to thrive, and pollute the air that they breathe.

So, as we authorize transportation programs and pass the next recovery package, we can't be satisfied by just fixing highways, or increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road. As with all of our infrastructure, whether we are talking about physical or social infrastructure, we need to rethink and rebuild from the ground up. We need to heal the wounds of history. We need to reconstruct these systems based on principles of care and love for all people, and for the planet we share.

Every American should be able to efficiently navigate their city, suburb, or town by train or electric bus. And they shouldn't have to pay much, if anything, to do it.

Everyone should be able to access transit that is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and beyond.

Let's build safe, walkable, bike-friendly and accessible streets and communities knit together by a world-class, affordable, high-speed rail system. Let's turn our unnecessary highways into parks, and protect communities from displacement and gentrification. And at every turn, we have to combine zero-carbon structures with the public services, good-paying employment opportunities, and clean environments that all people need to be free.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

[Mr. Bowman's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jamaal Bowman, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Thank you to Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify today.

When I launched my campaign for Congress, the first rally I attended in my district was at Co-Op City in the Bronx. This is the largest naturally occurring retirement committee, and the largest affordable housing development, in the entire country. And the rally was about New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority reducing bus service to this incredible community.

As a new Congressman, I fought successfully for a new COVID vaccination center at Co-Op City—because it was taking seniors an entire two hours, via two trains and a bus, to get to the closest mass vaccination site. All of this speaks to depth, and the racist distribution, of transit needs in the United States. Even in a city with the largest public transit system in the country.

The MTA's infrastructure needs are well-known. With the federal government's help, they are seeking to invest over \$50 billion in the region's transit system over the next few years. What if places like Co-Op City could be the flagships for a new, transformative approach to infrastructure? What if transit-oriented development meant focusing on the well-being of our communities, by expanding access to childcare, education, nature, and the arts? We should be linking together innovative models of public and affordable housing like Co-Op City, and other public services, with extensive new transit networks. All of it fully accessible, and all of it zero-carbon.

My district, New York's 16th, encompasses parts of both Westchester County and the Bronx. Because of the way people's lives are intersected and invaded by highways, trucks, and polluting facilities, The Bronx has some of the highest rates of asthma in the country. Within New York City, Bronx children are the most likely to be hospitalized by asthma. These burdens are a daily reality for many children: nationwide, 1 out of 11 public schools is located within 500 feet of a highway or truck route.

Fossil fuel pollution leads to roughly 350,000 premature deaths every year in the US, and Black people are exposed to particulate matter at 1.5 times the rate of the general population. Comorbidities linked to this pollution have made COVID even deadlier. And all of this is concentrated in redlined communities that face a variety of crises, like undrinkable water or failing sewage systems. In the city of Mount Vernon in my district, aging pipes are regularly sending wastewater into people's homes.

Transit is a part of this larger infrastructure crisis. Getting from one side of my district to the other is a nightmare. Many people commute from Westchester into New York City for work, and this is extremely challenging for those who already struggle with the cost of housing and childcare. Some try to lower the cost by avoiding the more expensive commuter rail system, which greatly increases their commute time. This leads to a horrible quality of life for many thousands of people.

Instead of bringing us together, our current transportation system keeps us apart. Prior federal infrastructure investments, like the Federal Highway Administration's work during Urban Renewal, destroyed Black and Brown communities in my district. Highways built during this time, like the Cross Bronx Expressway, remain physical barriers that separate my constituents from the resources they need to thrive, and pollute the air that they breathe.

So as we reauthorize transportation programs and pass the next recovery package, we can't be satisfied by just fixing highways, or increasing the number of electric vehicles on the road. As with all of our infrastructure—whether we're talking about physical or social infrastructure—we need to rethink and rebuild from the ground up. We need to heal the wounds of history. We need to reconstruct these systems based on principles of care and love for all people, and for the planet we share.

Every American should be able to efficiently navigate their city, suburb, or town by train or electric bus, and they shouldn't have to pay much—if anything—to do it. Everyone should be able access transit that is fully compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and beyond.

Let's build safe, walkable, bike-friendly, and accessible streets and communities—knit together by a world-class, affordable high-speed rail system. Let's turn our unnecessary highways into parks, and protect communities from displacement and gentrification. And at every turn, we have to combine new, zero-carbon structures

with the public services, good-paying employment opportunities, and clean environments that all people need to be free.

Thank you again, and I yield back.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much, and I now yield 5 minutes to Congresswoman Underwood of Illinois.

[Pause.]

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Congresswoman Underwood?

[Pause.]

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Congresswoman Underwood, you're up. Can you hear us?

[Pause.]

Mr. MALINOWSKI. We'll come back to Congresswoman Underwood. Mr. Levin—

Ms. UNDERWOOD [interrupting]. I believe I was next, I don't know if I am recognized to speak.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Yes, Lauren, I just recognized you. Can you hear me?

Ms. UNDERWOOD. OK, now I can hear you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Great.

Ms. UNDERWOOD. OK.

TESTIMONY OF HON. LAUREN UNDERWOOD, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Ms. UNDERWOOD. Mr. Chairman, I am so grateful that you provided this opportunity for noncommittee members to share our priorities with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

In the wake of a devastating pandemic, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this year to fix our Nation's neglected infrastructure and set our country up for economic success for decades to come. I am thrilled that President Biden and congressional Democrats are moving quickly to build on the downpayment in the American Rescue Plan with much-needed, long-term investments in our communities—policies with widespread and bipartisan support.

My district runs from the Chicago suburbs and exurbs to the Wisconsin border and the rural communities that border Wisconsin. The infrastructure needs are broad, and over the last 2 years my team and I have consistently surveyed our local leaders so that we can best advocate for their needs. Let me tell you what we have heard.

Most people in my district aren't thinking in the trillions. But for some of them, they might as well be, because of how hard it is to access existing Federal funding streams.

So that is my first point. This package truly needs to be "big picture" when it comes to distributing the resources that it includes. It needs to meet the needs of small communities that can't afford a lobbyist or a full-time grant writer, not just the big guys.

Next, this package needs to be "big picture" in how it defines infrastructure. Expanding Metra mass transit services to the Chicago suburbs in Kendall County is one of the top priorities for economic opportunity and quality of life in my district. So is securing a new, long-term water source for Joliet and surrounding communities facing the risks of unstable water supply due to depleted aquifers.

In addition to smaller investments through community project funding, these kinds of larger scale, regional projects need to be part of the conversation about an infrastructure package.

But as we revitalize transportation, we need to be bold in how we improve the tools needed to support an economy that works for everyone, including so many communities in my district that need greater investment.

In McHenry County, infrastructure means rural broadband access for small businesses and students, including finalizing new maps that better address exactly which areas are still pretty much dial-up. In Spring Grove, infrastructure means upgrading water treatment facilities to help people in our community live healthier lives. In West Chicago, infrastructure means removing and replacing old water service lines contaminated with lead.

We need to build new projects and fix and maintain old ones. Continuing to put off maintenance of our existing infrastructure isn't just dangerous, it is way too expensive for our constituents and our Government. The average Illinois driver pays over \$600 per year in costs incurred by driving on roads in need of repair.

And the 2017 Republican tax law raised costs for my constituents even further by eliminating the SALT deduction, an issue that absolutely must be addressed by this Congress at the soonest opportunity.

These upgrades need to be made, and as you all know, they are never again going to be cheaper than they are today. Will all of this be a serious investment? Well, of course, because we should be paying for quality American workers and quality American jobs, not tax cuts for the biggest corporations.

And lastly, as we talk about cost, I want to note that a lack of action is the most expensive choice of all. Failing to meet this mandate to go big and get our country back on track as we battle this pandemic, failing to deliver on the reasons that voters sent us here with a Democratic Senate, House, and White House for the first time in a decade, that will come with costs that fall most heavily on the American people that we serve.

So thank you again for having me. I am looking forward to working together with all of you to bring America's infrastructure into the future. I yield back.

[Ms. Underwood's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Lauren Underwood, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Illinois**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for providing this opportunity for non-committee Members to share their priorities with the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee.

In the wake of a devastating pandemic, we have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this year to fix our nation's neglected infrastructure and set our country up for economic success for decades to come. I am thrilled that President Biden and congressional Democrats are moving quickly to build on the down payment in the American Rescue Plan with much-needed long-term investments in our communities—policies with widespread and bipartisan public support.

My district runs from the Chicago suburbs and exurbs all the way up to rural communities on the Wisconsin border. The infrastructure needs are broad, and over the last two years my team and I have consistently surveyed our local leaders so that we can best advocate for their needs.

Let me tell you what we've heard: Most people in my district aren't thinking in the trillions. But for some of them, they might as well be—because of how hard it is to access existing federal funding streams.

So that's my first point: this package truly needs to be big-picture when it comes to distributing the resources it includes. It needs to meet the needs of small communities that can't afford a lobbyist or a full-time grantwriter, not just the big guys.

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Expanding Metra mass transit service to the Chicago suburbs in Kendall County is one of the top priorities for economic opportunity and quality of life in my district. So is securing a new long-term water source for Joliet and surrounding communities facing the risks of unstable water supply due to depleted aquifers.

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And lastly, as we talk about costs, I want to note that a lack of action is the most expensive choice of all. Failing to meet this mandate to go big and get our country back on track as we battle this pandemic—failing to deliver on the reasons that voters sent us here with a Democratic Senate, House, and White House for the first time in a decade—that will come with costs that fall most heavily on the American people we serve.

Thank you all again for having me—I'm looking together to working with all of you to bring America's infrastructure into the future.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you, Ms. Underwood, and I now have the pleasure of yielding 5 minutes to Mr. Levin from California.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MIKE LEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. LEVIN OF CALIFORNIA. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. And thank you, Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for holding today's Members' Day hearing.

This Congress we have a unique opportunity to pass the long awaited infrastructure package that our constituents have been repeatedly promised over the years. And as you assemble the portions of the infrastructure package that fall under the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's jurisdiction, I urge you to incorporate provisions that address the climate crisis, both by making our transportation infrastructure more resilient, and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

In particular, I urge you to prioritize regionally and nationally significant mega-projects that build resiliency, such as a key railway relocation project in my district.

President Biden's American Rescue Plan aims to unify and mobilize the country to fight the climate crisis, which it calls one of the great challenges of our time. Strengthening the resilience of our infrastructure is critical as our country experiences the impacts of this climate crisis. In my district in southern California, climate change means more intense wildfires, deeper droughts, and rising sea levels. I know that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have also experienced these impacts, which is why climate resilience has been a significant area of bipartisan cooperation.

I commend your committee on the bipartisan progress you have made in this space previously, and I hope it can expand this Congress.

Like in many parts of the country, the rising sea levels in my district have accelerated coastal erosion. This has caused a range of concerning impacts for coastal safety and property, including threats to the integrity of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor, also known as the LOSSAN Rail Corridor, which is the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the Nation that also carries a minimum of \$1 billion worth of goods annually.

A portion of this rail corridor in San Diego County runs through the city of Del Mar on bluffs located adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. The Del Mar Bluffs, which support the railroad infrastructure and track bed, have experienced and continue to be vulnerable to major erosion. Most recently, there were major bluff collapses in March of 2021 and December of 2020, which necessitated continued emergency work to shore up the bluffs and maintain the integrity of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor. And I can share the photos with the committee, and you would be astonished that it wasn't a more serious loss of life or loss of property.

A significant failure of the bluffs impacting the LOSSAN Rail Corridor for an extended period of time will severely harm the local and regional economy. And we are talking of two of the most important population centers in the United States. This impacts jobs, schools, and all economic activity throughout southern California, and really through the Western United States.

The corridor is used by commuter and intercity trains, and also supports significant freight operations. As such, it is part of the U.S. Strategic Rail Corridor Network, also known as STRACNET, that provides critical service to 147,000 Active Duty servicemembers and 5 major military installations in the San Diego area.

Our local metropolitan planning organization, the San Diego Association of Governments, is executing a project to protect the LOSSAN Rail Corridor by relocating it inland—for those that know, by the 5 Freeway, adjacent to the 5 Freeway. Significant planning is already complete, and SANDAG has also been conducting exploratory geotechnical work. We ultimately expect the relocation project will cost approximately \$3 billion, while creating tens of thousands of jobs.

So I strongly urge you to consider funding for resilience projects like the LOSSAN Corridor relocation in the infrastructure package. And in particular, I hope you prioritize regionally and nationally significant mega-projects like this that improve freight and com-

muter mobility across all modes, stimulate the economy, provide congestion relief, improve safety, build resiliency, and so much more, while considering existing federally recognized programs such as STRACNET.

Additionally, funding should be set aside to support the LOSSAN Rail Corridor specifically, as is done for the Northeast Corridor, the intercity rail corridor that ranks just ahead of LOSSAN in ridership. This project is a triple win. It creates jobs, it bolsters climate resilience, and it protects our national security, and it is critical for southern California.

So thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to working with you on these critical resilience projects in the 117th Congress. Thanks, and I yield back.

[Mr. Levin of California's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Mike Levin, a Representative in Congress from the State of California

Thank you, Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for holding today's Member Day hearing. This Congress, we have a unique opportunity to pass the long-awaited infrastructure package that our constituents have been repeatedly promised. As you assemble the portions of the infrastructure package that fall under the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's jurisdiction, I urge you to incorporate provisions that address the climate crisis, both by making our transportation infrastructure more resilient and by reducing greenhouse gas emissions. In particular, I urge you to prioritize regionally and nationally significant mega-projects that build resiliency, such as a key railway relocation project in my district.

President Biden's American Rescue Plan aims to unify and mobilize the country to fight the climate crisis, which it calls one of the great challenges of our time. Strengthening the resilience of our infrastructure is critical as our country experiences the impacts of the climate crisis. In my district, climate change means more intense wildfires, deeper droughts, and rising sea levels. I know that many of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle have also experienced these impacts, which is why climate resilience has been a significant area of bipartisan cooperation. I commend your committee on the bipartisan progress you have made in this space previously, and I hope it can expand this Congress.

Like in many parts of the country, the rising sea levels in my district have accelerated coastal erosion. This has caused a range of concerning impacts for coastal safety and property, including threats to the integrity of the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor, which is the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the nation and also carries \$1 billion worth of goods annually. A portion of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor in San Diego County runs through the City of Del Mar on bluffs located adjacent to the Pacific Ocean. The Del Mar Bluffs, which support the railroad infrastructure and track-bed, have experienced and continue to be vulnerable to major erosion. Most recently, there were major bluff collapses in March 2021 and December 2020, which necessitated continued emergency work to shore up the bluffs and maintain the integrity of the LOSSAN Rail Corridor.

A significant failure of the bluffs impacting the LOSSAN Rail Corridor for an extended period of time will severely harm the local and regional economy and the ability for individuals to access jobs, schools, and other economic activity centers in Southern California. This corridor is used by commuter and intercity trains, and also supports significant freight rail operations. As such, it is part of the U.S. Strategic Rail Corridor Network (STRACNET) and provides critical service to the 147,000 active duty servicemembers and five major military installations in the San Diego Area.

Our local metropolitan planning organization, the San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), is executing a project to protect the LOSSAN Rail Corridor by relocating it inland. Significant planning is already complete and SANDAG has also been conducting exploratory geotechnical work. We ultimately expect the relocation project will cost approximately \$3 billion, while creating tens of thousands of jobs.

I strongly urge you to include funding for resilience projects like the LOSSAN Corridor relocation in the infrastructure package. In particular, you should prioritize regionally and nationally significant mega-projects that improve freight and commuter mobility across all modes, stimulate the economy, provide congestion relief, improve safety, and build resiliency, while considering existing federally-recognized programs such as STRACNET. Additionally, funding should be set aside to support the LOSSAN Rail Corridor specifically, as is done for the Northeast Corridor, the intercity passenger rail corridor that ranks just ahead of LOSSAN in ridership.

The LOSSAN relocation project is a triple win: it creates jobs, bolsters climate resilience, and protects our national security. It is absolutely critical for Southern California.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I look forward to working with you on these critical resilience issues during the 117th Congress.

Mr. MALINOWSKI. Thank you so much.

And next I am happy to yield 5 minutes to Congresswoman Jayapal of Washington.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. PRAMILA JAYAPAL, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WASHINGTON**

Ms. JAYAPAL. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for this opportunity to share the concerns of Washington's Seventh Congressional District.

As we consider how to best repair a country ravaged by a pandemic, I would like to raise four key priorities from my district: support for bridges, small and medium-sized cities, light rail, and earthquake resilience.

My first priority is generous funding for bridges, including for the BUILD Grant program. My district is surrounded by water, so bridges are critical to the health of our communities and regional economy. Look no further than the West Seattle Bridge, which was the most trafficked structure in Seattle until the city was forced to close the bridge last March of 2020, after an inspection revealed serious cracks in the infrastructure.

Seattle has since been working expeditiously to safely restore access, but the impact has been devastating for my constituents. West Seattle is accessible primarily through this bridge, so the city had to detour traffic to a much smaller crossing, which has strained other residential neighborhoods with traffic congestion and poor air quality. Businesses have been experiencing delays in getting supplies. The Port of Seattle terminal has experienced delayed truck deliveries to shipping containers. Customers from all over the region are unwilling to fight traffic to get to businesses, or frustrated at delayed food deliveries, and this is only going to get worse as COVID restrictions are lifted and people begin commuting again.

And the West Seattle Bridge is just one of the many bridges that needs assistance. The Seattle Department of Transportation recently analyzed 77 of our vehicle bridges in Seattle and found that in 2019, 65 percent were only in fair condition, and 6 percent were in poor condition, a truly untenable situation. I am grateful that the House passed H.R. 2 last year with a drastic increase in funding. But given its stalling in the Republican Senate last session, the need is more urgent than ever, and I urge the committee to expand its support for bridges in this next package.

Second, there is an urgent need for dedicated funding for medium-sized cities. The need for infrastructure improvements for roads and bridges is necessary, regardless of the size of city. And yet, small and medium-sized cities in my district face a much greater challenge in accessing the funding that is needed for critical repairs and projects. They have to compete against large cities for funds, but they just don't have the same resources as their larger counterparts. These smaller cities need a better shot at accessing funding so they can attract economic activity and address safety and quality of life for their residents. As we lead the economic recovery, let's provide robust and dedicated support to these small and medium-sized cities to ensure reliable infrastructure.

Third, I urge the committee to continue expanding its support for light rail projects. In my district, Sound Transit will triple our light rail system, an ambitious expansion. Further, our light rail system now runs on 100 percent carbon-free electricity, a first for major light rail systems in the country, through an innovative agreement signed with Puget Sound Energy to purchase wind energy directly from the utility's Green Direct Program. This is projected to save more than \$390,000 in electricity costs over the 10-year contract, while also supporting new, local, clean-energy jobs.

In our State, transportation is responsible for 40 percent of greenhouse gases, and transit is the linchpin of regional sustainability. Our country and our region need Federal assistance on important projects like this that reduce congestion, support our economy, and address climate change.

Finally, I want to briefly note my strong support for Federal assistance for earthquake resilience and risk reduction projects. The Pacific Northwest is highly prone to earthquakes, and Washington will continue to experience damaging, deadly, and expensive quakes. In fact, a FEMA spokesman put it bluntly: "The entire northwest coast will be toast."

Mr. Chairman, I know these are issues that you understand well, and I urge the committee to continue providing robust funding for States to prepare. As Congress enacts reforms to support a full economic recovery, I look forward to working with you to ensure substantial funding for bridges, dedicated funding for medium-sized cities, prioritizing earthquake resiliency, and our light rail systems.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and I yield back.

[Ms. Jayapal's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Pramila Jayapal, a Representative in Congress from the State of Washington

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for this opportunity to share the concerns of Washington's seventh congressional district.

As we consider how to best repair a country ravaged by a pandemic, I would like to raise four key priorities: support for bridges, small and medium-sized cities, light rail, and earthquake resilience.

My first priority is generous funding for bridges, including for the BUILD Grant program. My district is surrounded by water so bridges are critical to the health of our communities and regional economy. Look no further than the West Seattle Bridge, which was the most trafficked structure in Seattle until the city was forced to close the bridge in March 2020 after an inspection revealed cracks in the infrastructure. Seattle has since been working expeditiously to safely restore access, but the impact has been devastating for my constituents. West Seattle is accessible pri-

marily through this bridge. The city had to detour traffic to a much smaller crossing which strained other residential neighborhoods with traffic congestion and poor air quality. Businesses, have been experiencing delays in getting supplies. The Port of Seattle terminal has experienced delayed truck deliveries to shipping containers. Customers from all over the region are unwilling to fight traffic to get to businesses or frustrated at delayed food deliveries. These delays will only get worse as COVID restrictions are lifted and people begin commuting again.

And the West Seattle bridge is just one of the many bridges that needs assistance: the Seattle Department of Transportation recently analyzed 77 vehicle bridges and found that in 2019, 65 percent were in fair condition, and 6 percent were in poor condition—a truly untenable situation.

I am grateful that the House passed H.R. 2 last year with a drastic increase in funding. But given its stalling in the Republican Senate last session, the need is more urgent than ever and I urge the committee to expand its support for bridges in the next package.

Additionally, there is an urgent need for dedicated funding for medium-sized cities. The need for infrastructure improvements for roads and bridges is necessary regardless of the size of the city; yet small and medium cities face a greater challenge in accessing funding needed for critical repairs and projects. They must compete against large cities for funds, but do not have the same resources as their larger counterparts. These smaller cities need a better shot at accessing funding so they can attract economic activity and address safety and quality of life for their residents. As we lead economic recovery, we must provide robust and dedicated support to these small and medium-sized cities to ensure reliable infrastructure.

Third, I urge the committee to continue expanding its support for light rail projects. In my district, Sound Transit will triple its light rail system, an ambitious expansion. Further, our light rail system now runs on 100 percent carbon-free electricity, a first for major light rail systems in the country, through an innovative agreement with Puget Sound Energy to purchase wind energy directly from the utility's Green Direct program. This is projected to save more than \$390,000 in electricity costs over the 10-year contract while also supporting new local clean energy jobs. In our state, transportation is responsible for 40 percent of greenhouse gases and transit is the linchpin of regional sustainability.

Our country and our region needs federal assistance on important projects like this that reduce congestion, support our economy and address climate change.

Finally, I want to briefly note my strong support for federal assistance for earthquake resilience and risk reduction projects. The Pacific Northwest is highly prone to earthquakes and Washington will continue to experience damaging, deadly, and expensive quakes. In fact, a FEMA spokesperson put it bluntly: the entire northwest coast will be toast.¹ Mr. Chairman, I know these are issues that you understand well and I strongly urge the Committee to continue providing robust funding for states to prepare.

As Congress enacts reforms to support a full economic recovery, I look forward to working with you to ensure substantial funding for bridges, dedicated funding for medium-sized cities, prioritizing earthquake resiliency, and light rail systems. Thank you.

Mr. LYNCH [presiding]. The Chair recognizes the gentlelady from Minnesota, Ms. Craig, for 5 minutes.

I am not sure if you are muted.

TESTIMONY OF HON. ANGIE CRAIG, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MINNESOTA

Ms. CRAIG. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to Chairman DeFazio for recognizing the importance of this Members' Day hearing.

I am grateful for all of the work that together we accomplished in the 116th Congress, and I very much look forward to working with you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, to continue our work together.

¹Kathryn Schulz, *The Really Big One*, The New Yorker (July 13, 2015) <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/07/20/the-really-big-one>

As I have told you before, I came to Congress to work on the issues facing everyday Americans and everyday Minnesotans, like fixing our Nation's crumbling infrastructure by making it easier for communities in my district to carry out transformational projects. As a former member of the T&I Committee, I was proud to help shape H.R. 2 in the last Congress, and set the roadmap for putting people back to work on our infrastructure plan, like adding a lane and interchange on I-35 in Lakeville to ease traffic; improving Highway 52 in Goodhue County; and completing outstanding projects on Highway 13 that will improve freight access. Completing these projects, among many others, will help reduce congestion, increase safety, and are the infrastructure projects of our future.

The Moving Forward Act contained a number of key infrastructure policy priorities that we must get across the finish line this year. Therefore, I would strongly urge the committee to include the following policy proposals contained within the bill.

First is funding for active transportation projects with an Active Transportation Connectivity Grant program to support infrastructure investment in connected active transportation networks for walking and bicycling. The funding would support the development of active transportation networks such as the Veterans Memorial Greenway, which will connect Lebanon Hills and the Mississippi River Greenway through the Inver Grove Heights and Eagan communities. Last year H.R. 2 proposed to dedicate \$250 million in 1 year for the program. The infrastructure bill under development should include the grant program with full funding of \$500 million per year over the full life of the bill.

Secondly, increase Federal-aid highway funding and establish the Community Transportation Investment Grants program. This would help local governments such as Dakota County access new sources of funding to complete key community projects that are urgently needed, but currently lack the funding to complete.

Third, continue to recognize the importance of freight, and ensure devoted funding for multimodal transportation projects such as those under development on Highway 13 between Burnsville and Savage in my congressional district.

Fourth, increase flexibility and direct funding for rural communities and re-adopt the Craig Local Roads Amendment. H.R. 2 contained historic investments in dedicated local transportation funding, including the \$600 million per year through the Community Transportation Grant program for projects that improve safety and make necessary improvements, with a minimum of 25 percent of those funds set aside for our rural communities. It also would have established the Rebuild Rural Grant program focused on infrastructure in rural communities, and expand the High Risk Rural Roads program, and increase investments for safe rural roads without depleting other funding resources.

The base bill should also include the text of my amendment that was included to provide dedicated surface transportation block grant funding to local roads in communities with populations under 5,000.

Three more quick priorities.

Create a standalone bridge repair program. The updated proposal should carry over the minimum bridge investment requirement that will help States keep their bridges safe.

Encourage transportation and infrastructure careers. The bill should again examine current efforts and look for ways to encourage diverse applicants to fill in-demand transportation career opportunities.

Finally, increase available, safe truck parking. The bill should incorporate provisions of my Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act to address the shortage of parking for commercial motor vehicles to improve the safety of commercial motor vehicle drivers.

I have also been hearing directly from my local communities about the specific projects they wish to see funded under the committee's new process, and I look forward to sharing those with each of you soon. It is clear that demand is high for a robust infrastructure package to meet the overwhelming need, from the community's perspective, to increase our active trail networks, repair our highways and freeways to a state of good repair, and invest in modern transit systems.

Finally, I would also strongly encourage the committee to add relevant infrastructure programs such as the EPA's section 319 program, and include the text of the bipartisan Local Water Protection Act again this Congress, as the bill is advanced for a final floor vote.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to such important matters, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[Ms. Craig's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Angie Craig, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Minnesota**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio for recognizing me and holding today's Member Day Hearing.

I'm grateful for all the work we accomplished in the 116th Congress together and am very much looking forward to working with you and Ranking Member Graves to continue our work.

As I've told both of you before, I came to Congress to work on issues facing everyday Americans, like fixing our Nation's crumbling infrastructure by making it easier for communities in my district to carry out transformational projects.

As a former member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, I was proud to help shape H.R.2 last Congress and set the roadmap for putting people back to work on our infrastructure needs—like adding a lane and interchange on I-35 in Lakeville to ease traffic, improving Highway 52 in Goodhue County and completing outstanding projects on Highway 13 that will improve freight access.

Completing these projects, among many others, will help reduce congestion, increase safety and are the infrastructure projects of our future.

The Moving Forward Act contained a number of key infrastructure policy priorities that we must get across the finish line this year.

I would strongly urge the Committee to include the following policy proposals contained within the bill:

- *Funding for active transportation projects with an Active Transportation Connectivity Grant Program* to support infrastructure investment in connected active transportation networks for walking and bicycling. The funding would support the development of active transportation networks such as the Veterans Memorial Greenway, which will connect Lebanon Hills and the Mississippi River Greenway through Inver Grove Heights and Eagan. Last year, H.R. 2 proposed to dedicate \$250 million in one year for the program; the infrastructure bill under development should include the grant program with full funding at \$500 million per year over the full life of the bill. (Sec. 1309)

- *Increase Federal-aid highway funding and establish the Community Transportation Investment Grants program.* This would help local governments such as Dakota County access new sources of funding to complete key community projects that are urgently needed but currently lack the funding to complete. (Sec. 1302)
- *Continue to recognize the importance of freight and ensure devoted funding for multimodal transportation projects* such as those under development on Highway 13 between Burnsville and Savage in my Congressional District. (Sec. 1212)
- *Increase flexibility and direct funding for rural communities, and re-adopt the Craig Local Roads Amendment.* H.R.2 contained historic investments in dedicated local transportation funding, including the \$600 million per year through the Community Transportation Grant Program for projects that improve safety and make necessary improvements, with a minimum of 25% of those funds set aside for rural communities. (Sec. 1302). It also would have established the Rebuild Rural Grant program (Sec. 1307) focused on infrastructure in rural communities and expanded the High Risk Rural Roads Program (Sec. 1209) and increase investments for safe rural roads without depleting other funding resources. The base bill should also include the text of my amendment that was included to provide dedicated surface transportation block grant funding to local roads in communities under 5,000.
- *Create a standalone bridge repair program.* The updated proposal should carry over the minimum bridge investment requirement that will help states keep their bridges safe. (Sec. 1207)
- *Encourage Transportation and Infrastructure Careers.* The bill should again examine current efforts and look for ways to encourage diverse applicants to fill in-demand transportation career opportunities. (Sec. 1610)
- *Increase Available Safe Truck Parking.* The bill should incorporate provisions of my Truck Parking Safety Improvement Act (H.R.2187) to address the shortage of parking for commercial motor vehicles to improve the safety of commercial motor vehicle drivers.

I have also been hearing directly from my local communities about the specific projects they wish to see funded under the Committee's new process and look forward to sharing those with you soon.

It is clear demand is high for a robust infrastructure package to meet the overwhelming need from my communities to increase our active trail networks, repair our highways and freeways to a state of good repair and invest in modern transit systems.

I also strongly encourage the Committee to add relevant infrastructure programs such as the EPA's Sec. 319 program and include the text of the bipartisan Local Water Protection Act again this Congress as the bill is advanced for a final floor vote.

Thank you for your time and attention to such an important matter. I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back. Our excellent committee staff has informed me that the following Members are in the queue and will be recognized in the following order: Mr. Neguse of Colorado, Mr. Tonko of New York, Congresswoman Stevens from Michigan, and Congresswoman Sánchez from California.

So Mr. Neguse from Colorado, you are now recognized.

TESTIMONY OF HON. JOE NEGUSE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF COLORADO

Mr. NEGUSE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify today about some of my priorities within the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's jurisdiction.

I represent a vast and diverse district, Colorado's Second Congressional District, that is bigger than the State of New Jersey, that stretches from Boulder to Fort Collins and along the Front Range of Colorado up through our mountain communities. The infrastructure needs of my district are as diverse as the geography of the district itself, which is also rapidly growing. In my district

and across the United States, our infrastructure is no longer able to meet the needs of the population and is in desperate need of repair and investments.

In Colorado there are more than 450 bridges, and 3,600 miles of roadway that are currently in poor condition. The State's infrastructure received a C-minus on its Infrastructure Report Card, illustrating the dire need for these investments that we are talking about today.

There are a number of projects that are shovel-ready and we will certainly advocate for as we work on the infrastructure bill in the months ahead, in particular including improvements on northern I-25 and on I-70 in the Floyd Hill project in my community. And I appreciate the opportunity to highlight those priorities, among others, for the committee.

I also want to talk about the importance of resiliency in our infrastructure. As many of us have seen in our districts, natural disasters are continuing to increase in number and severity as a result of climate change. In the last 10 years, extreme weather events have cost my State, Colorado, \$50 billion in damages. In my community, many communities are still recovering from devastating flooding that occurred 8 years ago, in 2013, and now from the first and second largest wildfires in recorded Colorado history, which burned in Colorado's Second Congressional District last summer and last fall.

We have to prioritize resiliency when building and rebuilding infrastructure to ensure that what we are building will be able to withstand the challenges of climate change.

I want to thank the committee for the work that you have already done to prioritize resiliency, and I would just ask you to respectfully consider my Climate Resilient Communities Act legislation in the upcoming infrastructure package. The bill would require a study on the benefits in prioritizing resiliency at the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA. I was glad to work with this committee, and with Chairman DeFazio in particular, last summer to include this bill as an amendment to the Moving Forward Act, and I would hope to work with you all again this year to include this bill in the legislation.

Secondly, I would be remiss if I didn't talk about the Wildfire Recovery Act, which is a bill that I introduced on a bipartisan basis with Representative Curtis of Utah. And I know it is incredibly important to the chairman, Chairman DeFazio, as well.

The bill is a result of the large fires in Colorado and many communities in the West, including in the States of Oregon, Nevada, Utah, and California, experienced last year. Driven by community concerns about meeting the cost share requirements for Fire Management Assistance Grants, FMAG, from FEMA, which supports firefighting costs related to wildfires, this bill would allow for flexibility in the Federal cost share for FMAG, and direct FEMA to issue guidance for raising that cost share. For communities working to recover from wildfires, and really facing a lot of budget pressures, flexibility in the Federal cost share for the FMAG program would be a huge help. And I hope to work with you and the committee in terms of including this effort in the upcoming legislative package.

Lastly, I want to mention another issue that is certainly very important to my district, which is train horns and quiet zones. The train horn noise and quiet zones issue, I know, has percolated before this committee on occasion in the past. Last year I worked with the committee to include an amendment studying train horn noise and additional measures that can be used to qualify for quiet zones. I think many Members will attest to this from the feedback they have received from their communities, that the quiet zone process can be very arduous and confusing for small cities and communities and counties working on these applications.

And so this amendment would provide much-needed clarity for those communities, and I would hope that the committee would consider including that amendment, which would reduce the burdens on communities, and increase the transparency surrounding the quiet zone process in, ultimately, the final infrastructure bill that is approved by the committee.

In closing, I want to thank Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify before you today, and I want to thank you for the many opportunities you provided for Members to engage in the infrastructure and surface transportation reauthorization projects, and the exciting opportunities provided with Member-designated projects.

And I also want to thank, in particular, the staff of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who have just been so incredible to work with, with our team, in ensuring that we highlight these various priorities, which are incredibly important to the people of Colorado and, ultimately, the people of our country.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I thank you for your consideration, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[Mr. Neguse's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Joe Neguse, a Representative in Congress from the State of Colorado

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify today about some of my priorities within the Transportation and Infrastructure committee jurisdiction.

I represent a vast and diverse district, Colorado's Second, from Boulder and Fort Collins along the Front Range of Colorado up through the mountains. The infrastructure needs of my district are as diverse as the geography of the district itself, which is also rapidly growing. In my district and across the US, our infrastructure is no longer able to meet the needs of the population and is in desperate need of repair and further investments.

In Colorado, there are more than 450 bridges and 3,600 miles of roadway that are currently in poor condition. The state's infrastructure received a C- on its infrastructure report card, illustrating the dire need for these investments that we are talking about today.

RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

I would like to start by talking about the importance of resiliency in our infrastructure. As many of us have seen in our districts, natural disasters are continuing to increase in number and severity, as a result of climate change. In the last ten years, extreme weather events have cost Colorado \$50 billion in damages. In my district, communities are still recovering from devastating flooding that occurred in 2013; and now from the first and second-largest wildfires in Colorado history that burned in Colorado's Second District last summer and fall.

We must prioritize resiliency when building and rebuilding infrastructure, to ensure that what we are building will be able to withstand the challenges of climate

change. I thank you for the work you are already doing to prioritize resiliency, and I would ask you to consider including my Climate Resilient Communities Act in the upcoming infrastructure package. This bill would require a study on the benefits to prioritizing resiliency at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). I was glad to work with you last summer to include this bill as an amendment to the Moving Forward Act, and hope to work with you again this year to include this bill.

WILDFIRE RECOVERY ACT

I would also like to talk about the Wildfire Recovery Act, a bill I introduced with Rep. Curtis of Utah as a result of the large fires Colorado—and many communities in the West—experienced last year. Driven by community concerns about meeting the cost share requirements for Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) from FEMA, which supports firefighting costs related to wildfires, this bill would allow for flexibility in the federal cost share for FMAG and direct FEMA to issue guidance for raising that cost share. For communities working to recover from wildfires and facing budget pressures, flexibility in the federal cost share for the FMAG program would be a great help, and I hope to also work with you on including this effort in the upcoming legislative package.

RRIF EQUITY ACT

I would also like to express my support for legislation soon to be introduced by my colleague from Colorado, Representative Perlmutter, which would provide a fix for an issue with the Railroad Rehabilitation Improvement and Financing (RRIF) grant program that we have been working with your committee on the last few years. Despite having repaid their entire loan, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) in Colorado is unable to get their Credit Risk Premium (CRP) returned to them until every grantee from their loan cohort has repaid their loans.

Last year, a fix for this issue was included in the House-passed appropriations bill, but unfortunately it was not included in the final Fiscal Year 2021 appropriations package. I am supportive of this bill my colleague introduced, and efforts to ensure RTD and others in their loan cohort can receive their Credit Risk Premium once they've repaid their entire loan.

TRAIN HORNS AND QUIET ZONES

Another issue of importance in my district is that of train horn noise and Quiet Zones. Last year, I also worked with your committee to include an amendment studying train horn noise and additional measures that can be used to qualify for Quiet Zones. The Quiet Zone process can be arduous and confusing for cities and counties working on these applications, and this amendment would provide needed clarity for those communities. I look forward to continuing to work with you on these efforts, as we look for ways to reduce the burden on communities and increase transparency surrounding the Quiet Zone process.

CLOSING

In closing, thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for the opportunity to testify before you today. I additionally want to thank you for the many opportunities you have provided for members to engage in the infrastructure and surface transportation reauthorization process, and the exciting opportunities provided with Member Designated Projects.

I am glad we will be building off of last year's Moving Forward Act, which included key investments in built infrastructure such as roads, bridges, transit, and railroads, but also included funding for school buildings and other important infrastructure. Our infrastructure is in dire need of investment across the board, and I am excited about the opportunities ahead of us to craft a comprehensive infrastructure package that meets the needs of the American people.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from New York, Mr. Tonko, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. PAUL TONKO, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF NEW YORK**

Mr. TONKO. Thank you, thank you. I just thank the Chair DeFazio, Representative Lynch, and members of the committee for the opportunity to address the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee today.

For far too long, our Nation's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair, dragging down our economy, and leaving us failing to meet the needs of the American people, and struggling to compete with the rest of the world. I continue to hear from residents of New York's 20th Congressional District about the risks posed by crumbling infrastructure. We have seen bridges collapse, communities experience repeated flooding, and the lack of equitable access to public transit.

New York received a C-minus grade on its Infrastructure Report Card from the American Society of Civil Engineers. This barely passing grade illuminates many deficiencies that require immediate attention, including repairs to our highways and bridges; modernization of public transportation, including trains and transit; the need to modernize our drinking water systems and wastewater treatment works and to do so with greater coordination in our approach to action within the interconnected water and sewer sectors; and efforts to increase energy efficiency to reduce household energy costs, improve weatherization, and ensure grid resiliency.

Transformational spending on infrastructure is key to our economic recovery. In districts like mine, the expansion of rail networks to connect small towns, addressing repeated water main breaks, the revitalization of local ports, and increased funding for innovative research and development will provide short-, medium-, and certainly long-term improvements to the systems that connect us and our economic prospects.

In our efforts to maximize job creation, we must ensure that disadvantaged communities are not left behind. An outsized emphasis on shovel-ready requirements predominantly benefits already well-off communities over those that, without early-stage support, would be unable to get projects past initial engineering and design work. For struggling towns and cities, this early project investment can make all the difference.

I believe that addressing our infrastructure challenges are a critical component of our holistic efforts to combat climate change and ensure a livable world for current and future generations. Building back better means embracing science, prioritizing the resiliency of our built and our natural environment. As chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change, I recognize that the climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our lifetime. And bold Federal climate action presents one of the greatest opportunities to create millions of good-paying jobs, and ensure that our workers and our businesses can compete in the already ongoing transition to a sustainable future and a clean-energy economy.

Earlier this year I helped introduce the CLEAN Future Act, ambitious climate legislation that would ensure that the United States take aggressive action this decade to achieve net zero greenhouse

gas pollution as quickly as possible. There is no question that this infrastructure bill is a tremendous opportunity to help us reach those lofty climate goals. Our Nation's deteriorating infrastructure is not solely a State or Federal issue. It is not a small or large business issue. It is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Infrastructure is an American issue that directly affects our ability to compete in the global marketplace and provide financial security for millions of American families.

In this moment we are presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to overcome the darkness of this pandemic, combat climate change, and rebuild our Nation in ways that make us stronger, safer, and certainly more respected. This is not only an opportunity to pave the roads we drive and improve our bridges. This is an opportunity to pave the way to a clean energy economy and build a bridge to connect us with a most prosperous future. Time is of the essence, and I look forward to working with you to deliver this powerful investment in the lives and livelihoods of all Americans.

My district is a compilation of several small cities, mill towns that are looking to reinvent themselves, to have that reconstruction effort made in their generation, and to have a comeback scenario really be a live and real concept. To do that, we need to make certain we invest in those small cities, those struggling cities. They need that opportunity to compete effectively, to have shovel-ready. They need those funds for that early start initiative. And they need to have information—inserting resources on items that will address quality of life, including rail opportunities, train stations, and certainly the efforts to have green moments, with infrastructure that provides innovative opportunities for infrastructure in their comeback scenario reconstruction moment.

So thank you, one and all, for the opportunity to invest in all of our communities, and to give that particular attention to innovation and our struggling communities looking to reinvent themselves.

With that I yield back, Mr. Chair.

[Mr. Tonko's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Paul Tonko, a Representative in Congress
from the State of New York**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio, for the opportunity to address the Committee today.

For far too long, our nation's infrastructure has fallen into disrepair, dragging down our economy and leaving us failing to meet the needs of the American people and struggling to compete with the rest of the world. I continue to hear from residents of New York's 20th congressional district on the risks posed by crumbling infrastructure—we have seen bridges collapse, communities experience repeated flooding, and a lack of equitable access to public transit.

New York received a C- grade on its Infrastructure Report Card from the American Society of Civil Engineers. This *barely passing* grade illuminates many deficiencies that require immediate attention—including repairs to our highways and bridges; modernization of public transportation, including trains and transit; the need to modernize our drinking water systems and wastewater treatment works, and to do so with greater coordination in our approach to action within the interconnected water and sewer sectors; and efforts to increase energy efficiency to reduce household energy costs, improve weatherization, and ensure grid resiliency.

Transformational spending on infrastructure is key to our economic recovery—in districts like mine, the expansion of rail networks to connect small towns, address-

ing repeated water main breaks, the revitalization of local ports, and increased funding for innovative research and development will provide short, medium, and long-term improvements to the systems that connect us and our economic prospects.

In our efforts to maximize job creation, we must ensure that disadvantaged communities are not left behind. An outsized emphasis on shovel-ready requirements predominantly benefits already well-off communities over those who, without early-stage support would be unable to get projects past initial engineering and design work. For struggling towns and cities, this early project investment can make all the difference.

I believe that addressing our infrastructure challenges are a critical component of our holistic efforts to combat climate change and ensure a livable world for current and future generations. Building back better means embracing science, prioritizing the resiliency of our built and natural environment.

As Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change, I recognize that the climate crisis is one of the greatest challenges of our lifetime—and bold federal climate action presents one of the greatest opportunities to create millions of good paying jobs and ensure that our workers and businesses can compete in the already ongoing transition to a sustainable future and a clean energy economy. Earlier this year, I helped introduce the CLEAN Future Act, ambitious climate legislation that would ensure that the United States take aggressive action this decade to achieve net zero greenhouse gas pollution as quickly as possible.

There is no question that this infrastructure bill is a tremendous opportunity to help us reach those climate goals.

Our nation's deteriorating infrastructure is not solely a state or federal issue. It is not a small or large business issue. It is not a Democratic or a Republican issue. Infrastructure is an *American* issue that directly affects our ability to compete in the global marketplace and provide financial security for millions of American families.

In this moment, we are presented with a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to overcome the darkness of this pandemic, combat climate change, and rebuild our nation in ways that make us stronger, safer, and more respected.

This is not only an opportunity to pave the roads we drive and improve our bridges—this is an opportunity to pave the way to a clean energy economy and build a bridge to connect us with a more prosperous future.

Time is of the essence, and I look forward to working with you to deliver this powerful investment in the lives and livelihoods of all Americans.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan, Ms. Stevens, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. HALEY M. STEVENS, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Ms. STEVENS. Great, thank you so much, Mr. Chair, for affording the time for these Member hearings. I am delighted to testify before you here today.

Certainly it is no surprise, and it is certainly an imperative for the State of Michigan and in my district, located in the southeastern corridor, that we are in desperate need of road improvements. And it is an unfunded mandate, and it is hampering economic activity. It is hurting public safety. And it is a demand that is crying out from every corner of Michigan's incredible 11th Congressional District.

Though our local and State officials have led the way with investing in local infrastructure and supporting infrastructure needs, there just hasn't been enough Federal support in our communities involving infrastructure needs, including simply making sure that our existing roads are still effective and safe.

There is a great example of a project in my district that I am really excited to share with all of you here today, a bipartisan, bicounty, multiple-community project called the Beck Road Im-


provement Corridor. This multijurisdictional project seeks to expand a congested roadway that is part of our Federal-aid highway, and install a grade separation to alleviate traffic and improve safety. The Beck Road Business Corridor Railroad Crossing Safety Project will construct a five-lane overpass over a current at-grade three-track railroad crossing on a busy business corridor with over 28,000 cars daily in the fastest growing section of the Metro Detroit area.

There are many—in fact, almost countless—industrial and retail concerns lining the Beck Road Business Corridor that must use a congested two-lane Beck Road corridor—lane—roadway and crossing that serves at least three freight trains. Right? So this is just a major focus of my communities, and something that we have been rallying around for years now. So we have got over 340 Wixom employers near the Beck Road Business Corridor railroad grade crossing area that depend on this road for access for their employers, for employees, for customers, and for freight traffic. There are approximately 7,000 jobs within 1 mile on either side of Beck Road. The average daily traffic counted on this road has increased approximately 200 percent over the last 20 years, resulting in a crash frequency that is 10 times worse than the regional average.

This project has strong community support, as I mentioned, and what I would like to do here—I have this map, all right? And I want to enter, Mr. Chair, to the record, this map of the project to show its significance for the region. All right? We have an aerial view of the map, and we have the actual snapshot of what that map looks like, if that is OK, Mr. Chairman.

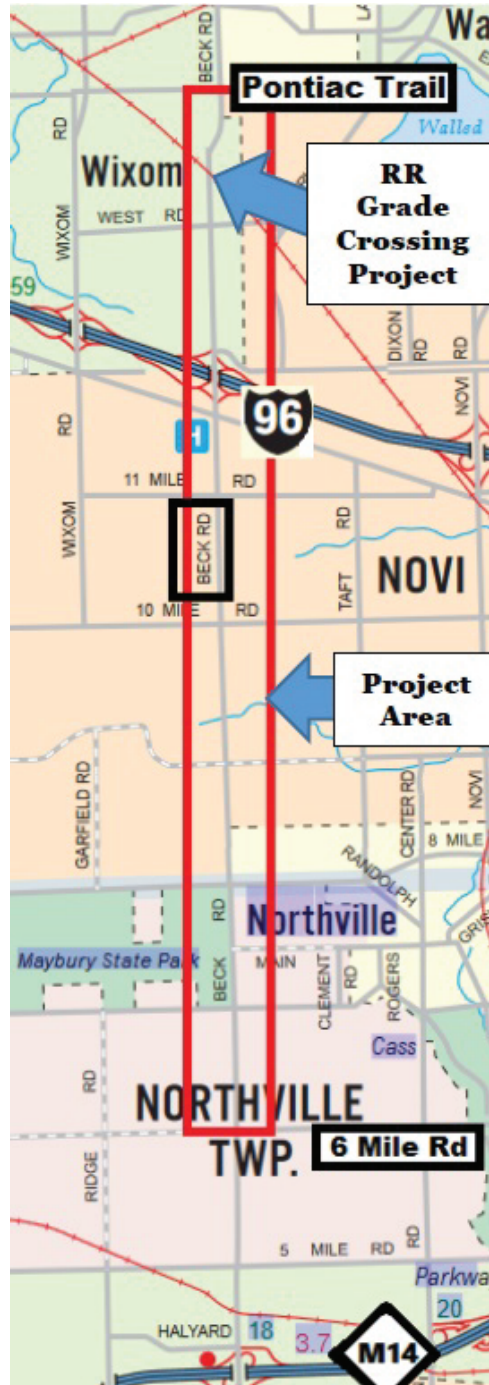
Mr. LYNCH. Without objection, so ordered.

[The information follows:]



**Aerial View and Map of the Beck Road Project, Submitted for the Record
by Hon. Haley M. Stevens**





Ms. STEVENS. Thank you. So this is by no means the only project in my district worth highlighting as a critical piece of our thriving innovation ecosystem. But it is one example of how far investments can go to make our constituents' lives better, and to make sure that we are all receiving our fair share of Federal funding and utilization of Federal taxpayer dollars. Certainly, approaches have been taken—received grants that have not been awarded at this time.

We also need for Michigan—it is incumbent on me to mention the consideration and the importance of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The auto industry is the economic backbone of both my district and the State of Michigan, and our companies and workers have been long making investments into new battery production technology to increase the use of electric vehicles in the United States. So what we would like you to do is make sure that we are prioritizing electric vehicle infrastructure in any upcoming legislation, and to ensure that the United States of America is the continued driver and accelerator and proliferator of this great American jobs opportunity in electric vehicles.

I am looking forward to working with you and your committee as we continue to invest in infrastructure and address issues such as safety and congestion, and I yield back, Mr. Chair.

[Ms. Stevens' prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Haley M. Stevens, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Michigan**

Good afternoon. I would like to thank you, Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and distinguished Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for hosting this hearing today to seek our input on infrastructure issues critical to our districts.

As I visit every corner of my incredible district in southeastern Michigan, one common theme has become abundantly clear—our roads are in desperate need of improvement. Though our local and state officials have led the way with investing in our infrastructure, there has not been nearly enough federal support for our communities' evolving infrastructure needs, from electric vehicle infrastructure to simply making sure our existing roads are still effective.

One such project in my district is the Beck Road Improvement Corridor. This is a multi-jurisdictional project comprised of four municipalities and two counties, which seeks to expand a congested roadway to alleviate traffic.

There are approximately 7,000 jobs within one mile on either side of Beck Road, with hundreds of companies that rely on this road for freight and customer traffic. The average daily traffic county on this road has more than doubled over the past 20 years, resulting in a crash frequency that is *10 times worse* than the regional average.

Though I strongly support continued investment in transit options to reduce congestion and increase safety, our roadways and bridges have been so neglected that making investments such as this project today will create meaningful solutions to accommodate traffic growth, safety, and economic development in regions such as my district where public transit is not easily accessible.

This is by no means the only project in my district worth highlighting as a critical piece of our thriving innovation ecosystem in Michigan-11, but it is one example of how far our investments can go to make our constituents' lives better and their families safer.

Another topic I would like to lay before the Committee's consideration is the importance of electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The auto industry is the economic backbone of both my district and the state of Michigan, and our companies and our workers have been making investments into new battery and production technology to increase the use of electric vehicles in the United States.

Though the technology and market issues are key, our electric vehicle development is only as good as the infrastructure that enables widespread consumer use. With any infrastructure package, we have a great opportunity to invest in a stand-

ardized charging system across the U.S. to ensure that any driver of an electric vehicle has access to adequate charging capability while creating good-paying American union jobs.

I look forward to working with your committee to invest in America's infrastructure while creating jobs and sparking innovative solutions to critical transportation issues such as safety and congestion.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlewoman from California, Ms. Sánchez, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Ms. SÁNCHEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to the ranking member, as well, for this important opportunity to highlight the needs of working families in my communities.

In southern California we are used to wasting, literally, years of our lives just sitting, stuck in traffic. For so many families, the pandemic has been the first time that traffic wasn't a daily reality in their lives. And for a short time before the wildfire season, we experienced the cleanest air anyone can remember after our highways emptied out. It shouldn't take the worst global health crisis in a century, and our lives coming to a standstill, just to experience some fresh air. We have got to do better, especially for communities like mine in eastern L.A. County that have seen transportation investments pass us by.

I have been proud to work with L.A. Metro, the county, and local agencies on projects to fix this inequity. For example, the West Santa Ana Branch will finally bring rail service to 1.2 million L.A. County residents who have never had an alternative to sitting in traffic, whether in a car or a bus. Once this 19-mile corridor is complete, it will link the cities that I serve, like Bellflower, Artesia, and Cerritos, with the entire L.A. Metro rail network.

Many other cities I represent can finally look forward to rail service through the extension of the Gold Line through the Eastside Corridor phase 2. This critical project will bring clean, affordable transportation, and historic opportunities to the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, and Whittier.

Neither project by themselves will erase decades of uninvestment and underinvestment, but they are exactly the kind of meaningful differences that we can make to reduce some of the daily pressures on working families. And neither would be possible without my community's willingness to vote itself tax increases time and time again. We put our own skin in the game over and over again, because we can't wait any longer to fix the Federal Government's historic obsession with highways that divide our communities.

While we build a future for our kids that isn't dependent on sitting in a car, we also have got to take better care of the roads and bridges that we continue to rely on. The Del Amo Boulevard Bridge is a perfect example of what happens when the Federal Government fails to keep up with the basics. It is over 50 years old, it is rated structurally deficient, and it snarls traffic every single day. It also connects two counties and three cities, so it is the kind of project that the Federal Government should help fix.

Fortunately, L.A. Metro has stepped up with county tax dollars so that we can proceed with the project's planning. But this transportation reauthorization should be the first step in better helping our communities keep up with our infrastructure needs. After the crisis we have lived through, the work we are doing this year is deeply urgent to finally put the pandemic in the rearview mirror.

But we can't just rebuild to the old normal, where the first breath of clean air comes from our economy being closed overnight. We have got to rebuild a future where clean air and opportunity is a reality for all, no matter what zip code you live in. By properly funding critical projects like these, we will accomplish just that.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for listening to my comments, and I yield back.

[Ms. Sánchez's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Linda T. Sánchez, a Representative in
Congress from the State of California**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for this important opportunity to highlight the needs of working families in my community.

In Southern California, we are used to wasting years of our lives to just sitting in traffic. For so many families, the pandemic has been the first time that traffic wasn't a daily reality in their lives.

And for a short time before wildfire season, we experienced the cleanest air anyone can remember after our highways emptied out. It shouldn't take the worst global health crisis in a century and our lives coming to a standstill just to experience some fresh air.

We've got to do better.

Especially for communities like mine in eastern LA county that have seen transportation investments pass us by. I've been proud to work with LA Metro, the county, and local agencies on projects to fix this inequity.

For example, the West Santa Ana Branch will finally bring rail service to 1.2 million LA County residents who have never had an alternative to sitting in traffic—whether in a car or a bus.

Once this 19 mile corridor is complete, it will link many of the cities I serve like Bellflower, Artesia, and Cerritos with the entire LA Metro rail network. Many other cities I represent can also finally look forward to rail service through the extension of the Gold Line through the Eastside Corridor Phase 2.

This critical project will bring clean, affordable transportation and historic opportunity to the cities of Montebello, Pico Rivera, Santa Fe Springs, and Whittier. Neither of these projects by themselves will erase decades of underinvestment. But they are exactly the kind of meaningful differences we can make to reduce some of the daily pressure on working families.

And neither would be possible without my community's willingness to vote itself tax increases time and again. We put our own skin in the game over and over again because we can't wait any longer to fix the federal government's historic obsession with highways that divide our communities.

While we build a future for our kids that isn't dependent on sitting in a car, we also have got to take better care of the roads and bridges we will continue to rely on. The Del Amo Boulevard bridge is a perfect example of what happens when the federal government fails to keep up with the basics.

It's over 50 years old, rated "structurally deficient," and snarls traffic every single day. It also connects 2 counties and 3 cities. So it is the kind of project that the federal government should help fix.

Fortunately LA Metro has stepped up with county tax dollars so that we can proceed with the project's planning.

But this transportation reauthorization should be the first step in better helping our communities keep up with our infrastructure needs. After the crisis we have lived through, the work we are doing this year is deeply urgent to finally put the pandemic in the rearview mirror.

But we can't just rebuild to the old normal where the first breath of clean air came from our economy closed overnight. We've got to rebuild to a future where clean air and opportunity is a reality for all. No matter the zip code.

By properly funding critical projects like these, we will.
Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back.

Our excellent staff has once again informed me that the following Members are now in the queue, and will be recognized in the following order: Mr. Rosendale of Montana; Ms. Gay Scanlon of Pennsylvania; Mr. O'Halleran of Arizona; Mr. Levin of Michigan; Mrs. Lawrence of Michigan; Mrs. Trahan of Massachusetts; and Mr. Connolly of Virginia.

So the Chair now recognizes Mr. Rosendale of Montana for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. MATTHEW M. ROSENDALE, SR., A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MONTANA

Mr. ROSENDALE. Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you very much for having me here today.

As you look to develop surface transportation legislation, I ask that you recognize the importance of Federal-aid highways in rural States and the vital role they play, not only my community, but nationally.

Federal-aid highways are the lifeblood of Montana's economies, serving interstate commerce and tourism, and they provide vital connections for people and businesses from all over the country. Montana's agriculture, natural resources, and energy industries rely heavily on strong highway systems to provide access to domestic and international markets. The State of Montana has 73,648 miles of road, of which they rely heavily on Federal funding, as we have one of the lowest population bases in the country. I ask that you recognize the benefits of investment in highways in rural States, and the unique challenges faced by States with long stretches of road and few people to support them.

Furthermore, I ask that the committee consider legislation to invest in our Nation's infrastructure, and I urge you to include bipartisan language that authorizes the Keystone XL pipeline. As you know, on the first day in office, President Biden issued an Executive order revoking the permit for a Keystone XL pipeline. I urge you to consider the lasting impacts this policy will have on Montana taxpayers and local economies.

The Keystone XL pipeline would cross the United States-Canadian border in Phillips County, Montana. This project would provide 12,000 jobs to the surrounding areas, and has already created 200 jobs in Montana alone, therefore stimulating local economies and creating additional jobs to support these workers.

The Keystone XL pipeline would generate tens of millions of dollars in tax revenues for local communities, including county governments and school districts. In fact, the project would provide \$26 million per year in combined tax revenue to six Montana counties, and approximately \$60 million annually, statewide. The President's decision to cancel the permit will eliminate 3,700 Montana-based construction jobs that would have garnered \$127 million in employment earnings.

This project would benefit historically poor rural areas. I urge the committee to take up bipartisan language that authorizes the Keystone XL pipeline.

Thank you for allowing me to come before the committee to discuss Montana's priorities. I yield my remaining time.

[Mr. Rosendale's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr., a Representative
in Congress from the State of Montana**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for having me here today.

As you look to develop surface transportation legislation, I ask that you recognize the importance of federal-aid highways in rural states and the vital role they play not only in my community, but nationally.

Federal-aid highways are the life blood of Montana's economies, serving interstate commerce, tourism, and they provide vital connections for people and business from all over the country.

Montana's agriculture, natural resources, and energy industries rely heavily on strong highway systems to provide access to domestic and international markets.

The state of Montana has 73,648 miles of road, of which they rely heavily on federal funding as we have one of the lowest population bases in the country.

I ask that you recognize the benefits of investment in highways in rural states and the unique challenges faced by states with long stretches of road and few people to support them.

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The president's decision to cancel the permit, will eliminate 3,700 Montana based construction jobs that would have garnered \$127 million in employment earning.

This project would benefit historically poorer, rural areas.

I urge the committee to take up bipartisan language that authorizes the Keystone XL Pipeline.

Thank you for allowing me to come before the committee to discuss Montana's priorities.

I yield my time.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes Ms. Gay Scanlon from Pennsylvania for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. MARY GAY SCANLON, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA**

Ms. SCANLON. Thank you so much for hosting us to talk about the needs of our districts.

I represent Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District, which includes parts of Philadelphia and its suburbs, and much of the in-

infrastructure network for the region and, in fact, the east coast. My district includes Philadelphia's airport, port, rail yard, and a key part of the Northeast Corridor, dozens of miles of highway and passenger rail lines. Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional District also includes much of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's transit network, which operates commuter and light rail lines, subways, trolleys, and buses that link Philadelphia and its suburbs.

The problems facing my district's infrastructure system are not that different from those of similar Northeast cities. Systems are old, heavily used, and authorities don't have enough money to meet their maintenance needs. For decades we have allowed this underfunding to persist, so that now the Greater Philadelphia area has billions of dollars in maintenance backlogs, which, in turn, prevent investment in modernization, expansion, or other improvements, as every dollar is stretched thin to keep the whole network functioning.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation spends about \$9 billion a year, and yet this meets only about half the Commonwealth's maintenance, modernization, and upgrade needs. My region's MPO, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission, estimates that the Philadelphia region will need \$130 billion over the next 25 years to bring the system to a state of good repair. And SEPTA has a \$5 billion maintenance backlog, with a \$640 million annual capital budget.

This lack of funding is unsustainable, and that is why it is so important for Congress to get these infrastructure bills right. With the right amount of funding, and with the commitment of forward-thinking and long-term investments, we can provide the foundation for robust economic growth in the 21st century. The fixes, upgrades, and expansions that Federal dollars will facilitate will translate directly into jobs and economic activity, as well as less traffic, better and more economical road safety, and cleaner air and water.

And so I ask your committee to continue to lead the way in providing robust, comprehensive funding to meet the country's infrastructure needs. We need funding for backlogs, new projects, climate change mitigation, and road safety; funding for airports, ports, and multimodal connections to ensure reliable, low-cost supply chains for businesses and manufacturers; and funding for Amtrak to improve passenger rail service and explore opportunities for high-speed rail.

The possibilities for our country are endless. We need only the imagination to realize these ambitious goals.

We cannot afford to limit our conversations on infrastructure to roads and bridges. Social infrastructure must be part of any bill we move forward if we are to maintain America's competitiveness in the global economy.

Congress made great progress last year in passing H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, which included keystone bills from the Education and Labor, Energy and Commerce, and Financial Services Committees to rebuild our schools, construct affordable housing, and expand broadband access to the whole country. These projects, along with affordable, quality childcare for our next generation,

and provisions to help our seniors age in place and with dignity, will have a tremendous impact on my constituents, while creating good-paying jobs and stimulating economic growth.

I know that some of these issues may be beyond your committee's jurisdiction, but I ask that you please continue working with the other committees to ensure that the American Jobs Plan meets the ambitious goals set by President Biden. As you develop these important infrastructure bills, I thank you for keeping these concerns in mind.

Thank you all again for holding this hearing and allowing me to share my district's priorities with you. I yield back.

[Ms. Scanlon's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Mary Gay Scanlon, a Representative in
Congress from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and the entire committee—thank you for providing your colleagues with the opportunity to voice our infrastructure priorities as you all begin working on this year's surface transportation reauthorization bill and the American Jobs Plan.

In the months ahead, Congress has a once in a generation opportunity to fix, modernize, and reimagine our infrastructure systems to address today's shortcomings and tomorrow's needs. We have aging transportation networks, fragile electric grids, and a shamefully lacking water infrastructure that leaves an unacceptably high number of Americans without clean drinking water or adequate sewage systems. And, all of this is happening in the greater context of the climate crisis, where on one hand, our infrastructure remains vulnerable to climate change, and on the other, smart investments in our infrastructure will allow for emissions reductions and greater climate resiliency. So, as you consider these problems and the bold solutions necessary to address them, I ask that you please consider the needs of my district.

I represent Pennsylvania's Fifth Congressional district, which includes parts of Philadelphia and its suburbs, and much of the city's infrastructure network. My district includes Philadelphia's airport, port, rail yard, and, as a key part of the northeast corridor, dozens of miles of highways and passenger rail lines. PA-5 also includes much of the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority's transit network, which operates multiple commuter and light rail lines that link Philadelphia and its suburbs.

The problems facing my district's infrastructure system are not that different from those of similar northeast cities—everything is old, heavily used, and transportation authorities don't have nearly enough money to meet their maintenance needs. For decades, Congress allowed this underfunding to persist, so that now the greater Philadelphia area has billions of dollars in maintenance backlogs. Which in turn prevent investment in modernization, expansion, or other improvements, as every dollar is stretched thin to keep the whole network functioning.

The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation spends about \$9 billion a year, and yet this only meets about half the Commonwealth's maintenance, modernization, and upgrade needs. My region's MPO—the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission—estimates that the Philadelphia region will need \$130 billion over the next 25 years to bring the system to a state of good repair. And, SEPTA has a \$5 billion maintenance backlog with a \$640 million annual capital budget. This lack of funding is unsustainable, and that is why it is so important for Congress to get these infrastructure bills right.

With the right amount of funding, and with a commitment to forward-thinking, long-term investments, we can provide the foundation for robust economic growth in the 21st Century. The fixes, upgrades, and expansions that federal dollars will facilitate will translate directly into jobs and economic activity, as well as less traffic, better road safety, and cleaner air and water.

And so, if there's one thing you take away from my testimony today, it's that your committee leads the way in providing robust, comprehensive funding to meet the country's infrastructure needs. We need funding for backlogs, new projects, climate change mitigation, and road safety; funding for airports, ports, and multimodal connections to ensure reliable, low-cost supply chains for businesses and manufactur-

ers; and funding for Amtrak to improve passenger rail service and explore opportunities for high-speed rail. The possibilities for our country are endless; we need only the imagination to realize these ambitious goals.

As you continue to develop these important infrastructure bills, please keep these concerns in mind. Thank you all again for holding this hearing and allowing me to share my district's priorities with you.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Arizona, Mr. O'Halleran, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. TOM O'HALLERAN, A REPRESENTATIVE
IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ARIZONA**

Mr. O'HALLERAN. I want to thank the chairman and the ranking member. Thank you for offering this important opportunity for Members to come before the committee to speak about infrastructure priorities. I am grateful for this opportunity to highlight the needs of rural and Tribal communities across Arizona.

The lack of bipartisan solutions to our national infrastructure has cost communities billions of dollars in economic activity and put the lives of children and families across the Nation in danger. I am looking forward to a bipartisan process going forward.

To rebuild rural communities, Congress must focus on economic development, including high-speed broadband, improving educational outcomes, and access to high-quality healthcare in rural communities. Rebuilding roads and highways in rural and Tribal areas must be a priority for any upcoming infrastructure package. While only 19 percent of the United States population lives in rural areas, 45 percent of all roadway fatalities occur on rural roads, making them two times more deadly than urban roads.

Every day, Arizona families drive on some of the most dangerous roads in the country. I just spent my time back in the district driving 2,000 miles on rural roads, and I can guarantee you they are in terrible shape. Across Arizona's First Congressional District alone, dozens of critical roads and bridge projects await completion. Arizona ranks the fifth highest in fatality rate per 100 million vehicle-miles traveled on rural and noninterstate roads.

The High Risk Rural Roads Safety Grant Program Act of 2021 would establish a grant program for high-risk rural road projects, specifically local and Tribal roads outside State department of transportation control. This bill, which I introduced with Representative Westerman from Arkansas, will invest in safety and economic activity by providing resources and funding necessary to carry out critical safety projects.

Nationally, 43 percent of America's public roads are in poor condition, and safety risks will continue to increase without action. Inclusion of my bill in an infrastructure package would improve the condition of many roads throughout the Nation and give rural America an opportunity to get funds they might not ever get again.

Additionally, I encourage the committee to address other rural transportation needs. For example, the Forest Service has a road and bridge maintenance backlog that exceeds \$3 billion. Addressing this backlog will stimulate rural economies and allow for safer conditions in many forests across the country. I have six national forests and the Grand Canyon in the district.

Lastly, water infrastructure, both for flood control and safe drinking water, is critical to a successful future for many Americans. Finishing projects like the Army Corps Little Colorado River Winslow Levee will improve life in rural communities and provide good jobs.

Ensuring all Americans have access to high-speed broadband, providing clean water, investing in aging energy systems, and rebuilding healthcare infrastructure is essential to American success, especially as our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This infrastructure package must respond to the needs of all Americans, including those in rural and Tribal communities.

The cost of inaction on infrastructure is too high to delay any further: first of all, health and safety; secondly, the cost just rises exponentially.

Again, I thank the committee for hearing from all Members, and I look forward to working together to address critical infrastructure issues.

Thank you very much, and I yield.

[Mr. O'Halleran's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Tom O'Halleran, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Arizona**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for offering this important opportunity for Members to come before the Committee to speak about infrastructure priorities.

I'm grateful for this opportunity to highlight the needs of rural and tribal communities across Arizona. The lack of bipartisan solutions to our national infrastructure has cost communities billions of dollars in economic activity and put the lives of children and families across the nation in danger.

To rebuild rural communities, Congress must focus on economic development including high-speed broadband, improving educational outcomes, and access to high quality health care in rural communities.

Rebuilding roads and highways in rural and tribal areas must be a priority for any upcoming infrastructure package. While only 19% of the US population lives in rural areas, 45% of all roadway fatalities occur on rural roads, making them 2 times more deadly than urban roads. Every day, Arizona families drive on some of the most dangerous roads in the country. Across the 1st Congressional District alone dozens of critical road and bridge projects await completion. Arizona ranks the 5th highest in fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled on rural and non-interstate roads.

The High-Risk Rural Roads Safety Grant Program Act of 2021 would establish a grant program for high-risk rural road projects, specifically local and tribal roads outside state department of transportation control. This bill, which I introduced with Representative Westerman from Arkansas, will invest in safety and economic by providing resources and funding necessary to carry out critical safety projects. Nationally, 43% of America's public roads are in poor condition and safety risks will continue to increase without action. Inclusion of my bill in an infrastructure package would improve the condition of many roads across the nation.

Additionally, I encourage the committee to address other rural transportation needs. For example, the Forest Service has a road and bridge maintenance backlog that exceeds three billion dollars. Addressing this backlog will stimulate rural economies and allow for safer conditions in many forests across the country.

Lastly, water infrastructure, both for flood control and safe drinking water is critical to a successful future for many Americans. Finishing projects like the Army Corps Little Colorado River Winslow Levee will improve life in rural communities, and provide good jobs.

Ensuring all Americans have access to high-speed broadband, providing clean water, investing in aging energy systems, and rebuilding health care infrastructure is essential to American success, especially as our communities recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. This infrastructure package must respond to the needs of all

Americans, including those in rural and tribal communities. The cost of inaction on infrastructure is too high to delay any further.

Again, I thank the committee for hearing from all members and I look forward to working together to address critical infrastructure issues.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentleman from Michigan, Mr. Levin, for 5 minutes.

**TESTIMONY OF HON. ANDY LEVIN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN
CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN**

Mr. LEVIN OF MICHIGAN. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman. Thanks to Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves. I really appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Michigan's Ninth Congressional District as you work to reauthorize our Nation's surface transportation programs. On behalf of my constituents, I want to highlight the need for action on electric vehicle, or EV, charging infrastructure; on green transportation infrastructure more broadly; and on important local projects across Michigan's Ninth Congressional District.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower once implemented a radical idea: a system of highways that would bring America together. It is time to expand on that idea and bring America's infrastructure into the 21st century. To do that, and to encourage our country's needed shift to EVs so that we may end our dependence on internal combustion vehicles, we must pass the EV Freedom Act, my bill to create a network of high-speed EV chargers throughout the National Highway System in 5 years.

This bill will create thousands of good-paying jobs, with robust Buy American and prevailing-wage requirements to protect hard-working Americans. I applaud President Biden's commitment to expanding the Nation's EV charging network, and rapidly building a network of at least 500,000 chargers. But what is really needed, the key role of the Federal Government, is to provide high-speed chargers along our Nation's roadways to facilitate road trips and slay range anxiety. I believe the EV Freedom Act is the policy to get us there. We can supercharge our economy, create the jobs of the future, further unify our country in a sustainable way, and at long last lead the world in green energy infrastructure.

But we can't stop there. The overall transportation sector represents the largest source of U.S. greenhouse emissions. We need to tackle the climate crisis and our crumbling infrastructure simultaneously by taking a big, bold step towards total transportation electrification. That is exactly what my BUILD GREEN Infrastructure and Jobs Act with Senator Warren, Senator Markey, and Representative Ocasio-Cortez will accomplish. It invests \$500 billion over 10 years in State, local, and Tribal projects to jumpstart the transition to all-electric public vehicles and rail, and modernize the Nation's infrastructure. Modeled after the Department of Transportation's successful BUILD Grants program, this is the investment we need to expand transportation electrification with urgency, and create good-paying, union jobs.

Before I close today, I want to talk about the topic that is perhaps most urgent of all: investing in projects that will benefit communities in Michigan's Ninth Congressional District. My team and

I have spent the last month collecting input from our local communities on critical transportation projects in need of Federal investment to get them across the finish line. Every one has funding also from State and local partners.

I am so grateful to our local leaders who identified projects varying from improvements in traffic signals, expanding bike lanes, resurfacing badly torn-up roads, increasing drainage along roadways, building ADA sidewalk ramps, and expanding green infrastructure. I look forward to sharing more details about these projects with the committee, and I request respectfully that the committee bear these priorities in mind when allocating funding to rebuild our crumbling roads and bridges, while simultaneously ensuring our investments tackle the climate crisis with the urgency and boldness it requires.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and the chance to speak to you today. I look forward to working with you on all of this, and I yield back.

[Mr. Levin of Michigan's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Andy Levin, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Michigan**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves: thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Michigan's 9th District as you work to reauthorize our nation's surface transportation programs. On behalf of my constituents, I would like to highlight the need for action on electric vehicle—or EV—charging infrastructure, on green transportation infrastructure more broadly, and on important local projects across Michigan's 9th District.

President Dwight D. Eisenhower once implemented a radical idea—a system of highways that would bring America together. It's time to expand on that idea and bring America's infrastructure into the 21st century.

To do that, and to encourage our country's needed shift to EVs so that we may end our dependence on conventional vehicles, we must enact the EV Freedom Act, my bill to create a network of high-speed EV chargers across the national highway system in five years. This bill will create thousands of good-paying jobs with robust Buy America and prevailing wage requirements to protect hardworking Americans.

I applaud President Biden's commitment to expanding the nation's EV charging network and building rapidly a network of at least 500,000 chargers. I believe the EV Freedom Act is the policy to get us there. We can supercharge our economy, create the jobs of the future, further unify our country in a sustainable way and lead the world in green energy infrastructure.

But we cannot stop there.

The transportation sector represents the largest source of U.S. greenhouse emissions.¹ We need to tackle simultaneously the climate crisis and our crumbling infrastructure by taking a big, bold step towards total transportation electrification.

That is exactly what my BUILD GREEN Infrastructure and Jobs Act with Senator Warren, Senator Markey and Representative Ocasio-Cortez will accomplish. It invests \$500 billion over 10 years in state, local and tribal projects to jumpstart the transition to all electric public vehicles and rail and modernize the nation's infrastructure. Modeled after the Department of Transportation's successful BUILD grants program, this is the investment we need to expand transportation electrification with urgency and create good-paying union jobs.

Before I close today, I want to talk about the topic that is perhaps most urgent: investing in projects that will benefit communities in Michigan's 9th district. My team and I have spent the last month collecting input from our local communities on critical transportation projects in need of federal investment to get them across the finish line.

¹ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). (2019). *Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions*. <https://www.epa.gov/ghgemissions/sources-greenhouse-gas-emissions>

I'm so grateful to our local leaders, who identified projects varying from improvements in traffic signals, expanding bike lanes, resurfacing badly torn up roads, increasing drainage along roadways, building ADA sidewalk ramps, and expanding green infrastructure.

I look forward to sharing more details about these projects with the Committee and request, respectfully, that the Committee bear these priorities in mind when allocating funding to rebuild our crumbling roads and bridges while simultaneously ensuring our investments tackle the climate crisis with the urgency and boldness it requires.

Again, I thank you for your consideration and the chance to speak to you today. I look forward to working with you.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentleman yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Michigan, Mrs. Lawrence, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. BRENDA L. LAWRENCE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MICHIGAN

Mrs. LAWRENCE. Thank you so much. I am glad to have this opportunity.

We know that the American Society of Civil Engineers 2018 report stated that Michigan received an overall grade of a D-plus, which describes our infrastructure systems as old and outdated, illustrating how severe Michigan's infrastructure challenges are. But Michigan is not alone in this struggle.

As a former mayor who had responsibility for infrastructure, struggling with the budget, trying to figure out how to make it work, coming up with our local matches, our economic downturn caused by this ongoing COVID-19, investing in infrastructure and good-paying jobs are even more imperative to my home State and our country's economic development, more than ever.

As the chairman rightfully stated, during the March 25th committee hearing with Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg, we know that in this pivotal time it is not just how much we invest, but how we invest these funds that will determine whether our infrastructure bill moves our Nation in the right direction.

We move our Nation in the right direction by ensuring that the infrastructure package is inclusive. This means ensuring women and communities of color are represented in the infrastructure workforce. We work to remove any and all barriers to the participation. We know that when we commit to rebuilding back better, that we cannot rebuild back better if it is not rebuilt back better by all of our community, by people of color, by women, that when we get all hands on deck, all of our economy—and we won't have these pockets of poverty left behind as the country is moving forward like we saw in the New Deal. We know at that time in our history we were proud of our investments, but we left people behind, and we do not want to do that this time.

One of the ways we can do that is by expanding women's participation in apprenticeship programs and other job training programs. We need to ensure that we are open and inclusive in letting of the contracts of these billions of dollars that we are going to invest in our infrastructure.

We know that we have a union President. However, our unions cannot continue to do business as usual, or else we will end up in the same place that we were before. Our workforce—when you go

into these communities of color, and they see the truck pull up, and we see all these people making these good-paying jobs, then we must ensure that they see their community represented in these contracts and in the workforce.

We must also provide supportive service to make it easier to participate in job training and apprenticeship programs such as pre-apprenticeship and childcare, transportation vouchers, tools, workwear, and retention services.

I want to commend the Biden administration for recognizing the need to strengthen our workforce, including investment in social infrastructure. Let us be clear about one thing: social infrastructure is infrastructure, and it is critical to our overall competitiveness.

I share the chairman's goal to build on H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, and how those priorities overlap with the administration goals of Build Back Better. And we must be able to build back better with women and with minorities included as a part of this recovery and jobs package.

As the proud representative of the Motor City, the city that put the country on wheels, I stand ready to work with members of this committee in a bipartisan manner to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure, to electrify our vehicles, and move our Nation forward.

I want to thank you, thank you, Chairman and the ranking member, for providing this opportunity, and I yield back. Thank you.

[Mrs. Lawrence's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Brenda L. Lawrence, a Representative in
Congress from the State of Michigan**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today regarding the paramount need to invest in our nation's infrastructure.

I am grateful for the Committee's leadership on this issue and for advancing a critically important conversation about how we can move forward with surface transportation authorization and promote robust investment in our infrastructure.

As a former Mayor, I understand that investing in our nation's infrastructure is not only critical to our economy, but also to our nation's recovery.

One of my top priorities in the 117th Congress is to "fix the damn roads," a pointedly accurate statement championed by Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer.

Michigan's infrastructure is critical for our economic progress, yet because of underinvestments in our roads and bridges, drivers are burdened with vehicle repair costs and small businesses suffer due to a loss in productivity.

According to a 2019 report from the Transportation Asset Management Council, 39 and 40 percent of major state roads in Michigan were rated in poor and fair condition, respectively, while only 21 percent were considered to be in good condition.

Similarly, in the American Society of Civil Engineers' 2018 report card, Michigan received an overall grade of D+, which described our systems as "old and outdated," illustrating the severity of Michigan's infrastructure challenges. Michigan is not alone in that struggle—we need a comprehensive investment in our nation's infrastructure.

With the economic downturn caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, investing in infrastructure and good paying jobs are more imperative to my home state and our country's economic development than ever before.

As the Chairman rightfully stated during the March 25, 2021 Committee hearing with Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg: "We know that in this pivotal time, it's not just how much we invest, but how we invest these funds that will determine whether an infrastructure bill moves our nation in the right direction."

We move our nation in the right direction by ensuring that the infrastructure package is inclusive.

This means ensuring women and communities of color are represented in the infrastructure workforce, and we work to remove any and all barriers to their participation.

In 2018, women made up nearly 47 percent of the U.S. workforce, but only account for 15 percent of the U.S. transportation industry workforce.

We must change this.

One of the ways we can do this is by expanding women's participation in apprenticeship programs and other job training programs.

We must also provide supportive services to make it easier to participate in job training and apprenticeship programs, such as pre-apprenticeship, child care, transportation vouchers, tools, work wear, and retention services.

I want to commend the Biden Administration for recognizing the need to strengthen our workforce as well, including investments in social infrastructure. Let me be clear about one thing: social infrastructure is infrastructure and it is critical to our overall competitiveness.

I share the Chairman's goals to build on H.R. 2, the Moving Forward Act, and how those priorities overlap with the Administration's goals to Build Back Better.

But we must be able to Build Back Better with women included as part of this recovery and jobs package.

As the proud Representative of the Motor City, I stand ready to work with Members of this Committee in a bipartisan manner to rebuild our crumbling infrastructure and move our nation forward.

I want to thank the Chairman and Ranking Member for providing me an opportunity to testify before you today, and I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back.

The Chair now recognizes the gentlelady from Massachusetts, Ms. Trahan, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. LORI TRAHAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

Mrs. TRAHAN. Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today.

Two years ago, I came before this committee to urge the advancement of two critical priorities for Massachusetts' Third Congressional District: reauthorizing and strengthening the Pipeline Safety Act, and massively increasing the Federal Government support for America's wastewater infrastructure needs, in particular, putting an end to combined sewer overflows.

As you know, on the first priority, due in large measure to the outstanding work of this committee, as well as the Energy and Commerce Committee, the PIPES Act became law at the end of 2020. This new law improves public safety and energy reliability in an environmentally sound manner. I am particularly grateful that the package included legislation that Senator Markey, Congressman Moulton, and I introduced, the Leonel Rondon Pipeline Safety Act.

This specific measure, which was named in honor of a young victim of the gas explosion that struck the Merrimack Valley on September 13th, 2018, is designed to prevent the types of catastrophic failures that took Leonel's life, injured so many others, and destroyed property in the cities of Lawrence and the towns of Andover and North Andover. This committee's work, I have no doubt, will save lives and property, and it will restore peace of mind to the communities that I am honored to represent.

Now that this bill has become law, I ask that you ensure the various rulemakings are rolled out on time, and consistent with congressional intent. In particular, section 206 includes a requirement

that qualified employees be present on-site at gas distribution system pipeline projects to prevent overpressurization.

In the Merrimack Valley case, a remote system in Ohio detected the overpressurization, but could not control the gas flow. Had this provision already been in the law, this disaster may have been avoided. The PIPES Act requires a new regulation on this provision within 180 days of enactment. And as of today we are 109 days from enactment. So please be sure that deadlines like this one are not allowed to slip.

With respect to the second matter, wastewater infrastructure, the committee's Moving Forward Act marks tremendous progress in restoring the Federal Government's role in protecting our waterways. As members of this committee know, Congress has long extended aid to help our cities and towns comply with the Clean Water Act. However, for much of the last 30 years, this aid has largely come in the form of loans, specifically the State revolving funds.

While these loans are crucial, the cities and towns that I represent are in need of grants, as well. Indeed, one of the recurring requests from community project funding that I have received from mayors and town managers is grant assistance for water and wastewater projects.

The need for these funds to upgrade wastewater systems cannot be overstated. Combined sewer systems—outmoded technology from the 19th century—routinely convey, by design, millions of gallons of untreated sewage directly into nearby bodies of water. Representatives Pappas, Kuster, Moulton, and I are particularly concerned by the recurring discharge of CSOs into the Merrimack River, a drinking water source for over half a million people. This is a problem that can only be solved by increased Federal investment.

I was pleased that the Moving Forward Act included a 77-percent increase in the authorized funding level for the sewer overflow control grants program, \$2 billion over 5 years. And over the last 2 years, Congress has begun providing real dollars for the new sewer control grants program. Indeed, the EPA announced funding allocations earlier this month. While we are not yet hitting the fully authorized level, we are at least pointed in the right direction.

I am especially appreciative of the fact that the committee adopted a provision inspired by the Stop Sewage Overflow Act, a bill that Representative LaHood and I have filed. The provision reduces the CSO grant program's non-Federal cost share requirement for economically disadvantaged areas. Households struggling to make ends meet simply do not have the space in their budgets to continually pay more and more in rising sewer rates. This provision will offer some much-needed relief.

As this committee advances infrastructure legislation, I would ask that you include the highest funding level possible for the CSO grants program and continue to prioritize easing the burden on economically disadvantaged communities in need of this aid.

Thank you so much for your consideration, and I yield back.

[Mrs. Trahan's prepared statement follows:]



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Lori Trahan, a Representative in Congress
from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for allowing me to testify before you today.

Two years ago, I came before this committee to urge the advancement of two critical priorities for Massachusetts' Third Congressional District: Reauthorizing and strengthening the Pipeline Safety Act; and massively increasing the federal government's support for America's wastewater infrastructure needs—in particular, putting an end to combined sewer overflows.

As you know, on the first priority, due in large measure to the outstanding work of this committee as well as the Energy and Commerce Committee, the "PIPES Act" became law at the end of 2020.

This new law improves public safety and energy reliability in an environmentally sound manner.

I am particularly grateful that the package included legislation that Senator Markey, Congressman Moulton, and I introduced—the Leonel Rondon Pipeline Safety Act.

This specific measure, which was named in honor of a young victim of the gas explosions that struck the Merrimack Valley on September 13th, 2018, is designed to prevent the types of catastrophic failures that took Leonel's life, injured many others, and destroyed property in the city of Lawrence and towns of Andover and North Andover.

This committee's work, I have no doubt, will save lives and property; and it will restore peace of mind to the communities I'm honored to represent.

Now that this bill has become law, I ask that you ensure the various rulemakings are rolled out on-time and consistent with Congressional intent.

In particular, section 206 includes a requirement that qualified employees be present on-site at gas distribution system pipeline projects to prevent over-pressurization.

In the Merrimack Valley case, a remote system in Ohio *detected* the over-pressurization—but could not *control* the gas flow. Had this provision already been in the law, this disaster may have been avoided.

The PIPES Act requires a new regulation on this provision within 180 days of enactment.

As of today, we are 109 days from enactment. Please be sure that deadlines like this one are not allowed to slip.

With respect to the second matter—wastewater infrastructure—the committee's Moving Forward Act marked tremendous progress in restoring the federal government's role in protecting our waterways.

As members of this committee know, Congress has long extended aid to help our cities and towns comply with the Clean Water Act. However, for much of the last 30 years, this aid has largely come in the form of loans—specifically, the State Revolving Funds.

While these loans are crucial, the cities and towns that I represent are in need of grants as well. Indeed, one of the recurring requests for "community project funding" that I have received from mayors and town managers is grant assistance for water and wastewater projects.

The need for these funds to upgrade wastewater systems cannot be overstated. Combined sewer systems—outmoded technology from the 19th century—routinely convey, *by design*, millions of gallons of untreated sewage directly into nearby bodies of water.

Representatives Pappas, Kuster, Moulton and I are particularly concerned by the recurring discharge of C-S-Os into the Merrimack River, a drinking water source for over half a million people. This is a problem that can only be solved by increased federal investment.

I was pleased that the Moving Forward Act included a 77 percent increase in the authorized funding level for the sewer overflow control grants program—\$2 billion over five years.

And over the last two years, Congress has begun providing real dollars for the new sewer control grants program. Indeed, the EPA announced funding allocations earlier this month. While we're not yet hitting the fully authorized level, we're at last pointed in the right direction.

I'm especially appreciative of the fact that the committee adopted a provision inspired by the Stop Sewage Overflow Act—a bill that Representative LaHood and I have filed. The provision reduces the C-S-O grant program's non-federal cost-share requirement for economically-disadvantaged areas.

Households struggling to make ends meet simply do not have the space in their budgets to continually pay more and more in rising sewer rates. This provision will offer some much-needed relief.

As this committee advances infrastructure legislation, I would ask that you include the highest funding level possible for the C-S-O grants program and continue to prioritize easing the burden on economically-disadvantaged communities in need of this aid.

Thank you, and I yield back.

Mr. LYNCH. The gentlelady yields back. There is currently a vote in Congress on the floor, so we are going to recess just briefly, and I am going to run over and vote, and somebody else is going to take the chair. So we will just go into a brief recess, subject to the will of the chair.

[Recess.]

Mr. KAHELE [presiding]. The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure will come to order.

The Chair recognizes Member Mr. Ryan from Ohio.

Mr. RYAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Can you hear me OK?

VOICE. Yes.

Mr. KAHELE. Yes, Mr. Ryan, we got you loud and clear.

Mr. RYAN. All right, I appreciate it.

TESTIMONY OF HON. TIM RYAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF OHIO

Mr. RYAN. I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, and Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you here this afternoon. I want to thank Chairman DeFazio for his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, and on each of the COVID-19 relief packages we passed, and the American Rescue Plan. And as Congress begins to do our work on the transportation and infrastructure bill, I would like to share some of my priorities within the committee's jurisdiction.

One of my top priorities is making sure that the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport in my district continues to fulfill its essential mission as a key component of the local transportation infrastructure in northeast Ohio. Market forces in recent years, including the most recent setback of U.S. commercial air services from COVID-19 travel restrictions and health and safety concerns, has left this airport in the precarious position of losing its commercial service categorization, and being reclassified as a general aviation airport, causing the loss of significant dollars intended for community airports under the CARES Act and subsequent program awards.

Additionally, the Youngstown-Warren Airport is one of very few airports that serve as home to an active Air Force Reserve station. This is important, because the airport, regardless of whether it is classified as a commercial airport or a general aviation airport, is always responsible for maintaining the runways for the Air Force C-130s that use them. It is very costly for the airport to provide a safely maintained and operational facility for the U.S. Air Force, and the Youngstown-Warren Airport counts on robust airport improvement funds to afford that maintenance.

I especially want to thank your committee staff, including Brian Bell, Alex Burkett, Adam Weiss, and Josué Ambriz for taking the

time to meet with my staff and the officials from the Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport, and offering to work with us to get this issue addressed.

President Biden's call to rebuild our crumbling roads and bridges is one that is heard loud and clear in Ohio. Ohio has received a C-minus grade on its Infrastructure Report Card. We have 1,377 bridges and over 4,925 miles of highway in disrepair. There is a desperate need for funding towards Ohio's critical means of transportation.

One well-known example of infrastructure that needs fixing is the Brent Spence Bridge connecting Covington, Kentucky, and Cincinnati, Ohio. This bridge, which is currently carrying double the load it was built for, is critically important to Ohio's economy, and Members of Congress and Presidents from both parties have been promising to get it fixed for years. Now is the time to finally get this bridge fixed.

Another example of where we need additional investment is the Appalachian Development Highway System. I urge the committee to fund the completion of this crucial transportation network throughout Ohio and Appalachia. Completing this highway system will go a long way towards raising the standards of living of the people who live in this historically impoverished region.

When it comes to how we move across the country, I believe it is crucial that we increase our efforts to support the production of electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure across our country. And investment in this technology is an opportunity for the United States to reclaim its role as leader in clean technology manufacturing amidst the climate crisis.

Manufacturing electric vehicles will also offer good-paying jobs to our workers, but only if we invest in them first. With the investments already made here in my district in battery and vehicle production, we can continue to lead the way in supporting clean energy manufacturing.

Turning to other parts of our Nation's crumbling infrastructure, I have been a long-time advocate that the Federal Government must invest in removing dangerous lead pipes across the United States. I am encouraged to see the Biden administration's infrastructure plan echoes this goal.

This Congress, I sponsored legislation that would invest \$100 billion to remove every lead pipe in the country. I adamantly believe that every person has a right to clean drinking water. We cannot stand by and watch as another generation of America's children are neurologically poisoned by lead pipes. I urge the committee to make this crisis end.

America's waterways are another area that I want to work with the committee to address. Currently, there is a lack of coordination between the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA when it comes to cleaning up polluted rivers. As a result, I have a river in my district, the Mahoning River, in desperate need of Federal investment. The entire community wishes to get this river cleaned up and restored to a free-flowing state, but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is unwilling to help remove contaminated sediment because they are afraid of being sued under the Environmental Protection Agency's CERCLA rules.

The interagency paralysis, which has lasted decades, is a shameful example of Government bureaucracy at its worst. I urge the committee to work with me on a fix so we do not leave this contamination in place, so that we can turn this waterway into an economic asset in northeast Ohio, so that our children will be able to access this river.

Lastly, I am thankful that this plan has put jobs and rebuilding our American workforce front and center for how we accomplish these important priorities. Ohio's workers helped build this country into what it is today, and they stand ready to build the infrastructure that will be funded by this committee. That is why we must maintain strong Buy American provisions and protections. I strongly encourage the committee to prioritize policies that ensure America's workers build America's infrastructure. Doing so is an investment in the quality of life of those not only for my constituents in Ohio, but for all across the Nation.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you, your staff, and across the aisle to make sure we address the issues outlined here today. Again, thank you for your steadfast leadership and attention to these very important issues.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

[Mr. Ryan's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Tim Ryan, a Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee—thank you for the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

And thank you Chairman DeFazio for your leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and on each of the COVID-19 relief packages we passed. Most recently, the American Rescue Plan that is simply an amazing achievement on behalf of the American people.

As Congress begins its work on transportation and infrastructure, I would like to share some of my priorities within the Committee's jurisdiction.

One of my top priorities is making sure that the Youngstown Warren Regional Airport (YNG) in my district continues to fulfill its essential mission as a key component of the local transportation infrastructure of Northeast Ohio. Market forces in recent years—including the most recent setback to US commercial air service from COVID-19 travel restrictions and health safety concerns—has left this airport in the precarious position of losing its Commercial Service categorization and being reclassified as a general aviation airport, causing the loss of significant dollars intended for community airports under the CARES Act and subsequent programs awards. Additionally, the Youngstown-Warren airport is one of very few airports that serves as home to an active Air Force Reserve Station. This is important because the Airport—regardless of whether it's classified as a commercial airport or a general aviation airport—is always responsible for maintaining the runways for the Air Force C-130's that use them. It is very costly for the Airport to provide a safely maintained and operational facility for the U.S. Air Force, and the Youngstown-Warren Airport counts on robust Airport Improvement Funds to afford that maintenance. I especially want to thank your committee staff—including Brian Bell, Alex Burkett, Adam Weiss, and Josué Ambriz—for taking the time to meet with my staff and officials from Youngstown-Warren Regional Airport and offering to work with us to get this issue addressed.

President Biden's call to rebuild our crumbling roads and bridges is one that is heard loud and clear in Ohio. Ohio has received a C- grade on its Infrastructure Report Card. We have 1,377 bridges and over 4,925 miles of highways in disrepair.

There is a desperate need for funding towards Ohio's critical means of transportation. One well-known example of infrastructure that needs fixed is the Brent Spence Bridge connecting Covington, Kentucky to Cincinnati, Ohio. This bridge, which is currently carrying double the load it was built for, is critically important to Ohio's economy and Members of Congress and Presidents from both parties have

been promising to get it fixed for years. Now is the time to finally get this bridge fixed.

Another example of where we need additional investment is the Appalachian Development Highway System. I urge the Committee to fund the completion of this crucial transportation network throughout Ohio and Appalachia. Completing this highway system will go a long way toward raising standards of living in this historically impoverished region.

When it comes to how we move across the country, I believe that it's crucial that we increase our efforts to support the production of electric vehicles and electric vehicle charging infrastructure across our country. An investment in this technology is an opportunity for the United States to reclaim its role as a leader in clean technology manufacturing amidst the climate crisis. Manufacturing electric vehicles will also offer good paying jobs to our workers, but only if we invest in them first. With the investments already made here in my district in battery and vehicle production, we can continue to lead the way in supporting clean energy manufacturing.

Turning to other parts of our nation's crumbling infrastructure, I have been a long-time advocate that the federal government must invest in removing dangerous lead pipes across the United States. I am encouraged to see the Biden Administration's Infrastructure plan echoes this goal. This Congress, I've sponsored legislation that would invest \$100 billion dollars to remove every lead pipe in the country. I adamantly believe that every person has a right to clean drinking. We cannot stand by and watch as another generation of America's children are neurologically poisoned by lead pipes. I urge the Committee to make address this crisis.

America's waterways are another area that I want to work with the committee to address. Currently, there is a lack of coordination between the Army Corps of Engineers and the EPA when it comes to cleaning up polluted rivers. As a result, I have a river in my district—the Mahoning River—in desperate need of federal investment. The entire community wishes to get this river cleaned up and restored to free flowing state but the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is unwilling to help remove contaminated sediment because they are afraid of being sued under the Environmental Protection Agency's CERCLA rules. This interagency paralysis—which has lasted decades—is a shameful example of government bureaucracy at its worst. I urge the Committee to work with me on a fix so we do not leave this contamination in place and so we can turn this waterway into an economic asset for Northeast Ohio.

Lastly, I am thankful that this plan has put jobs and rebuilding our American workforce front in center for how we accomplish these important priorities. Ohio's workers helped build this country to what it is today, and they stand ready to build the infrastructure that will be funded by this Committee. That is why we must maintain strong Buy America protections, and I strongly encourage the Committee to prioritize policies that ensure America's workers build America's infrastructure. Doing so is an investment in the quality of life of those not only for my constituents in Ohio, but for all across the nation.

Mr. Chair, I look forward to working with you, with your staff, and across the aisle to make sure we address the issues outlined here today.

Again, thank you for your steadfast leadership and attention to these important issues.

Mr. KAHELE. Mahalo, Mr. Ryan.

The Chair will now recognize the Member from the Virgin Islands, Ms. Plaskett.

TESTIMONY OF HON. STACEY E. PLASKETT, A DELEGATE IN CONGRESS FROM THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

Ms. PLASKETT. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you to the ranking member. Members of the committee, good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to present a statement of my views as we move forward on infrastructure legislation.

As the Member of Congress representing the Virgin Islands, I came to Congress determined to increase long-term Federal investment in all types of infrastructure. Supporting the movement of people, goods, and information through our infrastructure is crucial to driving investment in our communities and maintaining America's economic competitiveness.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan offers us a historic opportunity to build on the Moving Forward Act that was passed by the House last session and make further progress on infrastructure legislation.

In the midst of so much uncertainty in the economy during the current public health crisis, the American people need the certainty to count on stable and strong investment in infrastructure to sustain and create jobs, as well as to enhance the mobility and safety of American motorists, passengers, and throughput systems. The American Jobs Plan proposes to make a sound investment in America.

It is my hope that this committee takes care to make sure that equally extends to the underserved areas like the U.S. Territories—equally, and at the best, with equity. I ask that this include provisions to not only reverse the inequitable funding cuts endured by the Territories for almost 30 years now, but also to help those areas catch up and bring our Federal highways up to Federal standards—that being the equity portion.

While several States have received steady incremental increases in overall funding since the expiration of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991, when the set-aside formula for funding the Territorial highway program was scrapped, severe cuts have resulted in great strain on the surface transportation infrastructure in the U.S. Territories.

Instead of continuing to receive a percentage of highway funding, the allocation for the Territories was frozen at a flat-dollar amount, and that continues to this day. As a result, the Territorial highway program share of overall Federal-aid highway program funding has progressively declined by 50 percent from then until now, with the most significant decline occurring since enactment of the MAP-21 Act of 2012.

In the meantime, substandard highways, roads, and other infrastructure have been further affected by harsh weather patterns which have caused the Virgin Islands and other U.S. Territories to have an even more substantial need for Federal transportation infrastructure funding. In my district the people still feel the aftermath of major category 5 hurricanes every day. It has been their new normal for some time before the current new normal of life in the midst of a global pandemic.

We know firsthand that there are areas in every reach of this country that are in desperate need of revitalizing infrastructure. It is my primary request that the bill reported out of this committee to implement the American Jobs Plan, with respect to surface transportation, will lay the groundwork to do that.

For the long neglected U.S. Territories, I ask that the Territorial highway program be returned to the set-aside portion of the Federal-aid highway program funding, rather than a fixed amount, a set-aside that is equal to one-fifth of 1 percent of overall Federal-aid highway program funding. I am asking for one-fifth of a penny for progress, one-fifth of a penny for the people living in the Territory.

Using the Federal-aid highway program figures from the Moving Forward Act, which the House endorsed last year, the Territorial highway program would receive approximately \$110 million yearly

under this formula, up from the woefully deficient \$42 million level that is currently received, of which the Virgin Islands is apportioned 40 percent, which is \$16.8 million a year for our roads. Even the smallest States with comparable populations would receive 10 times that much in highway funding. For more than 25 years, the Territories have had to endure with barely more than the same level of funding from 1993.

I would also ask the committee that the amendments concerning the Territories added to the surface transportation portion of the Moving Forward Act in markup last year be continued in this year's surface transportation bill. This includes provisions to assist us.

My time has run out, but I ask that the rest of my statement be put into the record, and that the committee specifically consider additional modal units necessary for the Territories, including broadband and particularly maritime services, our ferryboat system and others.

Thank you very much, and I yield back.

[Ms. Plaskett's prepared statement follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Stacey E. Plaskett, a Delegate in Congress
from the Virgin Islands**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, members of the committee. Good afternoon and thank you for the opportunity to present a statement of my views as we move forward on infrastructure legislation.

As the Member of Congress representing the Virgin Islands, I came to Congress determined to increase long-term federal investments in all types of infrastructure. Supporting the movement of people, goods, and information through our infrastructure is crucial to driving investment in our communities and maintaining America's economic competitiveness.

President Biden's American Jobs Plan offers us a historic opportunity to build on the Moving Forward Act that was passed by the House last session and make further progress on infrastructure legislation. In the midst of so much uncertainty in the economy during the current public health crisis, the American people need the certainty to count on stable and strong investment in infrastructure to sustain and create jobs, and enhance the mobility and safety of American motorists, passengers, and throughput systems.

The American Jobs Plan proposes to make a sound investment in America. It is my hope that this committee takes care to make sure that equally extends to underserved areas like U.S. territories. I ask that this include provisions not only to reverse the inequitable funding cuts endured by the territories over almost 30 years, but also to help these areas "catch up" and bring our federal highways up to federal standards.

While the several States have received steady, incremental increases in overall funding since expiration of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), when the set-aside formula for funding the Territorial Highway Program was scrapped, severe cuts have resulted in great strain on the surface transportation infrastructure in the U.S. territories. Instead of continuing to receive a percentage of highway funding, the allocation for the territories was frozen at a flat dollar amount and that continues to this day. As a result, the Territorial Highway Program share of overall Federal-Aid Highway Program funding has progressively declined by 50%, from then until now, with the most significant decline occurring since enactment of the MAP-21 Act in 2012. In the meantime, substandard highways, roads and other infrastructure have been further affected by harsh weather patterns, which have caused the Virgin Islands and other U.S. territories to have an even more substantial need for federal transportation infrastructure funding.

In my district, the people still feel the aftermath of major category 5 hurricanes every day. It's been their "new normal" for some time before the current "new normal" of life in the midst of a global pandemic. We know firsthand that there are areas at every reach of this country that are in desperate need of revitalizing infra-

structure. It is my primary request that the bill reported out of this committee to implement the American Jobs Plan, with respect to surface transportation, will lay the groundwork to do that.

For the long-neglected U.S. territories, I ask that the Territorial Highway Program be returned to a set-aside portion of Federal-Aid Highway Program funding, rather than a fixed amount; a set-aside that is equal to one-fifth of one percent of overall Federal-Aid Highway Program funding. A fifth of a penny for progress. That is what I ask.

Using the Federal-Aid Highway Program figures from the Moving Forward Act, which the House endorsed last year, the Territorial Highway Program would receive approximately \$110 million yearly under this formula, up from the woefully deficient \$42 million level that it currently receives, of which the Virgin Islands is apportioned 40%, which is only \$16.8 million each year. Even the smallest States with comparable populations would receive ten times that much in highway funding. For more than 25 years, the territories have had to endure with barely more than the same level of funding they received in 1993. The set-aside funding that I have requested will allow for new expansion and innovative transportation initiatives, rather than cyclically replacing or reconstructing the same infrastructure.

I would also ask the committee that the amendments concerning the territories added to the surface transportation portion of the Moving Forward Act in markup last year be continued in this year's surface transportation bill. This includes provisions assisting the territories to compete within more Department of Transportation programs.

In addition, as the territories are all insular areas of the United States, a separate funding stream for ferry boats and other maritime services would be appropriate. Americans in the Virgin Islands live and work on several islands that cannot be connected by bridges. Although the Virgin Islands received Federal Highway Administration ferry program funding in the past, such funding has discontinued since the 2015 enactment of the FAST Act. Section 1112(c)(2) of the Act prohibited federal participation in the construction or purchase, for private ownership, of a ferry boat, ferry terminal facility, or other eligible project. While the government of the Virgin Islands owns the ferry terminals, it cannot afford to own or operate the ferries. As a result, the ferries themselves are privately owned and operated. Amending the law to exempt the Territorial Highway Program island areas from the restrictions on private ownership and operation would make the Virgin Islands ferry systems once again able to access Federal Highway Administration ferry program funding; and thereby allow for a reasonably-priced ferry system, thus growing the local economy.

Furthermore, I appreciate the opportunity that this committee has presented for investment in Member-designated projects this year. In the last decade, transformative projects that could catapult regional economies frequently get left on the planning room floor, either because of their size, complexity, or cost. Member-designated projects present a valuable opportunity to jumpstart new projects to connect communities from coast to coast, and to make big ideas a reality. In the Virgin Islands, opportunities like this are very important, as we face unique transportation challenges, based on our geographic location, with linking communities on each island area.

We also must continue our work to create new avenues to fund infrastructure projects in local communities that have been left behind, and in areas that have traditionally struggled to attract infrastructure funding for projects that have holistic community support. The Community Transportation Investment Grants program, proposed in the Moving Forward Act of last year, would be exclusive to local community projects and with broad eligibility to make sure that they have fair access to funding and can compete in a broadly applicable grant program. I ask that the provisions to establish this program be continued in this year's surface transportation reauthorization bill. We also should continue proposals for new funding streams that specifically target areas and communities with very high rates of poverty, and rural areas, including U.S. territories.

Lastly, in this next bill we must make sure that we are investing in building resilient infrastructure, and adopting new, innovative technologies that bolster safety and efficiency to create the infrastructure of the future. Mr. Chairman, we know that infrastructure projects are consistently evaluated as one of the best returns on government investments, and that Americans would rather spend more time working and doing the things they love than sitting in traffic, wasting time and money.

The American people are very concerned with infrastructure, and American business is very concerned with infrastructure. They employ Americans, and they subcontract with our small businesses. The resulting cycle creates real growth and

wealth in our communities in addition to getting them to and from work without a headache.

We must show our constituents, and our colleagues in the Senate, that we are determined to increase long-term federal investments in all types of infrastructure, and to build back better than we were before. Thank you.

Mr. KAHELE. Thank you, Ms. Plaskett, and we will ensure that your testimony gets submitted into the record. Thank you very much.

Ms. PLASKETT. Thank you.

Mr. KAHELE. The Chair would like to now recognize the Member from Illinois, Mr. Schneider, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. BRADLEY SCOTT SCHNEIDER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

Mr. SCHNEIDER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I want to thank the committee for this opportunity to testify. I also want to thank the committee for your flexibility in accommodating the changes in the schedule today.

My goal today is to bring to the attention of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure the priorities of my district as you all consider relevant legislation.

The U.S. is the wealthiest country in the world, but we rank only 13th on the quality of our infrastructure. The need for significant Federal investment in infrastructure is undeniable. This is something we can all agree on, regardless of party lines, regardless of whether you come from an urban or a rural area.

In the 10th Congressional District of Illinois, like the rest of the country, infrastructure means more than roads and bridges. It means adequate stormwater management and flood mitigation systems. It means affordable and accessible public transit. And it means that any investment in infrastructure, existing or new, must prioritize climate resiliency and transitioning to a green economy.

Every day, more people come to the realization that climate change poses an existential threat to our way of life. As we are already seeing its impact in our own communities, data shows that precipitation in my district is increasing, which my constituents have experienced firsthand in the form of severe flooding. During the past 4 years, the Des Plaines River Trail in Lake County was flooded 50 percent of the time. Let me repeat that: the Des Plaines River Trail in Lake County was flooded 50 percent of the time.

Investing in our infrastructure, reimagining and building in resilience by design will pay dividends down the road, especially as climate change continues to test our existing infrastructure. FEMA estimates that, for every dollar invested in flood mitigation, there are \$4 of public benefit. As the committee looks at prospective infrastructure legislation, I urge you to consider the impacts of climate change and building climate resiliency into our infrastructure investments, including flood mitigation.

We must also continue robust support for public transport. My district is part of the Chicagoland region, which has the second largest public transportation system in the United States. During the pandemic, ridership on suburban Chicagoland's Metra commuter trains fell 90 percent, and ridership on the city's CTA trains fell 80 percent.

Thanks to the funding from the CARES Act, Chicago was the only major city that was able to continue providing normal service on trains and buses. But as people begin to return to their workplaces, and we return to a somewhat normal life, our public transportation system must be equipped to handle the demand. I encourage the committee to significantly invest in accessible and affordable public transportation.

Finally, I encourage the committee to continue to prioritize bipartisanship as it considers upcoming infrastructure legislation. Decades of underinvestment in infrastructure has touched every State and every community in our country. As we begin to recover from the pandemic, we can best build our communities back better than they were before only if we work together on both sides of the aisle.

I want to thank the committee for the opportunity to advocate on behalf of my district, and I yield back the balance of my time.

[Mr. Schneider's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Bradley Scott Schneider, a Representative in Congress from the State of Illinois

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to testify. I hope to bring to your attention the infrastructure and transportation priorities of my district as you consider relevant legislation.

The U.S. is the wealthiest country in the world, but we rank only 13th on the quality of our infrastructure. The need for significant federal investment in infrastructure is undeniable. This is something we can all agree on—regardless of party lines, regardless if you come from an urban area or a rural area.

In the 10th District of Illinois, infrastructure means more than roads and bridges. It means adequate stormwater management and flood mitigation systems. It means affordable and accessible public transit. And it means that any investment in infrastructure—existing or new—must prioritize climate resiliency and transitioning to a green economy.

Climate change poses an existential threat to our way of life, and we are already seeing its impact in our own communities. Data shows that precipitation in my district is increasing, which my constituents have experienced firsthand in the form of severe flooding. During the past four years, the Des Plaines River trail in Lake County was flooded 50% of the time. Investing in our infrastructure now will pay dividends down the road, especially as climate change continues to test our existing infrastructure. FEMA estimates that for every dollar invested in flood mitigation, there are four dollars of public benefits. As the committee looks at prospective infrastructure legislation, I urge you to consider the impacts of climate change and building climate resiliency into our infrastructure investments, including flood mitigation.

We must also continue robust support for public transit. My district is a neighbor to Chicago, which has the second largest public transportation system in the U.S. During the pandemic, ridership on suburban Chicagoland's Metra commuter trains fell 90%¹ and ridership on the city's CTA trains fell 80%. Thanks to funding from the CARES act, Chicago was the only major city that was able to continue providing normal service on trains and buses. But as people begin to go back to work and we return to somewhat normal life, our public transportation systems must be equipped to handle the demand. I encourage the Committee to significantly invest in accessible and affordable public transportation.

Finally, I encourage the Committee to prioritize bipartisanship as it considers upcoming infrastructure legislation. Decades of underinvestment in infrastructure has hurt every state and every community in the country. As we begin to recover from the pandemic, we can build our communities back better than they were before only if we work together on both sides of the aisle.

Thank you for the opportunity to advocate on behalf of my district. I yield back.

¹ Source: <https://www.wbez.org/stories/chicago-area-transit-agencies-face-drastic-service-cuts-as-pandemic-ridership-plummets/eee8850e-73af-4443-be32-c3f996169117>

Mr. KAHELE. Mahalo, Mr. Schneider.

The Chair would like to now recognize a Member from Indiana, Mr. Mrvan, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. FRANK J. MRVAN, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF INDIANA

Mr. MRVAN. Thank you, Chairman. I would first like to thank the chairman, ranking member, and all the members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for holding today's hearing.

I have the great privilege of representing Indiana's First Congressional District, which is an incredible hub of economic and transportation networks. Our road, rail, waterway, and airport transportation systems connect the northwest Indiana regional economy to the Chicago economy and our Nation. Our unique location, coupled with Indiana's strong labor organizations that have skilled craft workers and our low-tax, business-friendly environment, continues to attract new residents and diversifies our economic development.

To better serve this demand, and relieve the traffic and congestion of our utilized transportation networks, I appreciate the opportunity presented by this committee to appear and testify today, and also that we have the ability to submit specific projects to the committee that will have tremendous benefit and economic revitalization in northwest Indiana's economy.

I am grateful for your commitment to utilizing the full capabilities of the legislative branch, and look forward to continuing to work with the committee to advocate for regional and transformational projects that will benefit individuals, families, workers, and businesses throughout northwest Indiana.

Additionally, with regard to policy, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to advocate for provisions regarding prevailing wage and project labor agreements, as well as strong Buy America requirements in legislation before your committee.

I also would note the critical importance of the Capital Investment Grant program, which is currently contributing to transformational investments in the South Shore Rail Line that will fundamentally improve the trajectory of northwest Indiana's economy for the next generation of residents.

As Congress prepares to consider much-needed investments in the Nation's public works infrastructure, we must ensure that every American has a good-paying job with safe workplace conditions. Prevailing wage requirements, also known as the Davis-Bacon requirements, protect communities and workers from unscrupulous contractors responding to bids on federally funded projects by setting wage rates to the local or prevailing standard.

Additionally, PLAs simply govern the terms and the conditions of employment for union and nonunion workers on federally funded projects, and help eliminate any delays related to labor conflicts or shortages of skilled workers.

I also strongly support rigorous Buy America policies to ensure that our American transportation infrastructure is constructed with American-made iron, steel, and manufacturing products. Domestic content provisions are common sense and good Government

policies that strengthen our national defense, create good-paying jobs, and support a robust national economy.

To demonstrate the bipartisan support of strong Buy America requirements, I would like to submit the recent letter circulated to the leadership by the Congressional Steel Caucus, on which I serve as cochairman. We must ensure that American-made goods are used in taxpayer-financed infrastructure as our Nation continues to move ahead to full economic recovery.

[The information follows:]

Letter of April 14, 2021, from the Congressional Steel Caucus, Submitted for the Record by Hon. Frank J. Mrvan

APRIL 14, 2021.

Hon. NANCY PELOSI,
Speaker,
House of Representatives, H-232, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC 20515.

Hon. KEVIN MCCARTHY,
Minority Leader,
House of Representatives, H-204, U.S. Capitol, Washington, DC 20515.

DEAR SPEAKER PELOSI AND MINORITY LEADER MCCARTHY:

As the House prepares to consider much needed investments in the nation's expansive public works infrastructure, we write to express our expectation that these investments be coupled with strong Buy America policies and constructed with American-made iron, steel, and manufactured products. These commonsense policies are an effective, trade-compliant tool to strengthen the economy and create jobs, while promoting a cleaner economy by rewarding U.S. production that meets our environmental regulations. These commonsense policies also work to shore up our national defense and preparedness as fragile U.S. supply chains have been exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic and its recovery efforts.

For more than a century, America's steel industry has supplied the vast needs of our nation's highway, bridge, transit, rail, airport, water, construction, energy, and other critical infrastructure. These markets are critically important to the domestic steel industry and its workers, who continue to face unprecedented challenges due to dumped and subsidized imports and chronic global steel overcapacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these problems, with demand still lagging its pre-pandemic levels.

As the House works to enact measures that will support a robust recovery, it is essential that public infrastructure investments be directed to U.S. production and American workers throughout the steelmaking supply chain. Accordingly, we urge improvements that broaden Buy America application across all forms of federally assisted and direct federal infrastructure spending, while covering more materials beyond iron and steel, closing loopholes, and defending the "all manufacturing processes" standard which ensures that raw steel production occurs here in the United States. Each dollar that is directed overseas is a missed opportunity to revitalize our nation's manufacturing sector and create good wage jobs for American workers. Furthermore, China's state-owned and state-subsidized manufacturers should not have access to American tax dollars.

American manufacturing stands to benefit from both a more efficient network to move goods to market and the increased demand generated for domestically produced iron, steel, and manufactured goods. As members of the Congressional Steel Caucus, we stand ready to work on a meaningful infrastructure package—one that prioritizes U.S. production and American workers.

Sincerely,

CONOR LAMB,
Member of Congress, Co-Chairman, Congressional Steel Caucus.

FRANK J. MRVAN,
Member of Congress, Co-Chairman, Congressional Steel Caucus.

RICK CRAWFORD,
Member of Congress, Co-Vice Chairman, Congressional Steel Caucus.

MIKE BOST,
Member of Congress, Co-Vice Chairman, Congressional Steel Caucus.

ROBERT B. ADERHOLT.	JOHN GARAMENDI.	JAMES P. MCGOVERN.
COLIN ALLRED.	BOB GIBBS.	DAVID B. MCKINLEY, P.E.
JAMES R. BAIRD.	ANTHONY GONZALEZ.	MARIANNETTE MILLER-
TROY BALDERSON.	PAUL GOSAR.	MECKS.
JIM BANKS.	ELEANOR HOLMES	BLAKE MOORE.
DAN BISHOP.	NORTON.	CHRIS PAPPAS.
SANFORD D. BISHOP, JR.	CHRISSY HOULAHAN.	MARK POCAN.
LARRY BUCSHON, M.D.	BILL JOHNSON.	GUY RESCHENTHALER.
CHERI BUSTOS.	DAVID P. JOYCE.	TIM RYAN.
JERRY L. CARL.	MARCY KAPTUR.	JAN SCHAKOWSKY.
ANDRÉ CARSON.	MIKE KELLY.	PETE STAUBER.
DAVID N. CICCILLINE.	TRENT KELLY.	STEVE STIVERS.
SHARICE DAVIDS.	DANIEL T. KILDEE.	CLAUDIA TENNEY.
ROSA DELAURO.	ANDY LEVIN.	MIKE TURNER.
DEBBIE DINGELL.	NANCY MACE.	DR. JEFF VAN DREW.
BRIAN FITZPATRICK.	LISA MCCCLAIN.	TIM WALBERG.
JEFF FORTENBERRY.	BETTY MCCOLLUM.	

Mr. MRVAN. Thank you again to Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, and all the members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, for the opportunity to testify, and for your dedicated work to grow our economy and improve our transportation infrastructure with transformational projects and policies that will benefit all current Americans and future generations.

With that, I yield back.

[Mr. Mrvan's prepared statement follows:]

Prepared Statement of Hon. Frank J. Mrvan, a Representative in Congress from the State of Indiana

I would like to thank Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and all the Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure for holding today's hearing.

I have the great privilege of representing Indiana's First Congressional District, which is an incredible hub of economic and transportation networks. Our road, rail, waterway, and airport transportation systems connect the Northwest Indiana regional economy to the Chicago economy and our nation. Our unique location, combined with Indiana's strong labor organizations that provide skilled craft workers and our low-tax, business friendly environment, continues to attract new residents who diversify our economic development. To better serve this demand and relieve the traffic and congestion of our utilized transportation networks, I appreciate the opportunity to appear and testify today, and I thank the Committee for soliciting projects that will have a transformative impact on our nation, including the Northwest Indiana economy. I am grateful for your commitment to utilizing the full capabilities of the Legislative Branch and look forward to continuing to work with the Committee to advocate for regional and transformational projects that will benefit individuals, families, workers and businesses throughout Northwest Indiana.

Additionally, with regard to policy, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to advocate for provisions regarding prevailing wage and Project Labor Agreements (PLAs), as well as strong Buy America requirements in legislation before your Committee. I also would note the critical importance of the Capital Investment Grant program, which is currently contributing to transformational investments in the South Shore Rail Line that will fundamentally improve the trajectory of the Northwest Indiana economy for the next generation of residents.

As Congress prepares to consider much needed investments in the nation's public-works infrastructure, we must ensure that every American has a good-paying job with safe workplace conditions. Prevailing wage requirements, also known as Davis-Bacon requirements, protect communities and workers from unscrupulous contractors responding to bids on federally-funded projects by setting wage rates to the local or prevailing standard. Additionally, PLAs govern the terms and conditions of employment for union and non-union workers on federally-funded projects, and help eliminate any delays related to labor conflicts or shortages of skilled workers.

I also strongly support rigorous Buy America policies to ensure that our American transportation infrastructure is constructed with American-made iron, steel, and

manufacturing products. Domestic content provisions are common-sense and good-government policies that strengthen our national defense, create good-paying jobs, and support a robust national economy. To demonstrate the bipartisan support for strong Buy America requirements, I would like to submit this recent letter circulated to House leadership by the Congressional Steel Caucus, on which I am proud to serve as Co-Chairman. We must ensure that American-made goods are used in taxpayer-financed infrastructure as our nation continues to move ahead to full economic recovery.

Thanks again to Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and all of the Members of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for the opportunity to testify, and for your dedicated work to grow our economy and improve our transportation infrastructure with transformational projects and policies that will benefit all Americans and future generations.

Mr. KAHELE. Mahalo, Mr. Mrvan.

The Chair would like to now recognize the Member from Wisconsin, Ms. Moore, for 5 minutes.

TESTIMONY OF HON. GWEN MOORE, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF WISCONSIN

Ms. MOORE. Thank you so very, very much, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves. I really appreciate the opportunity to testify today about our Nation's infrastructure priorities and the upcoming reauthorization of our highway and transit programs.

I would love to be able to submit my full testimony so I don't exceed the 5-minute limit.

As you know, President Biden's infrastructure and jobs plan details a number of important priorities to address transportation and infrastructure needs, and to put our citizens back to work, and to build back better. And so I want to outline some priorities that should guide this work.

I know, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, you are receiving a lot of input, hearing many concerns from many Members in this body. And my hope is that, with all of this discussion regarding the different types of products, projects funded, and methodologies, and vendors, and funding sources, and workforce development, and jobs projections, all of this, I am hoping that the people and workers and construction of these projects—that you hold equity and environmental justice as guiding principles. There is no one package that can solve every problem. But by centering the needs of those who are most impacted, we can be sure that this package will not only work for all of our goals, but also help us all build back better for everyone.

A priority of mine is making sure that needed infrastructure investments promote equity throughout. And I think it is important to note that the communities who suffer the most as a result of previous highway policies and aging transit and water infrastructure also face the highest levels of poverty, unemployment, pollution, and other forms of discrimination based on social status, race, and income levels.

In the upcoming highway and transit reauthorization and any future infrastructure package, I request that you ensure that these investments create real and sustainable pathways for minority and underserved communities to work on projects funded through the bill. This must include directly tying transportation investments to the creation of jobs in these targeted communities, such as those laid out in section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act

of 1968. That provision requires that recipients of HUD funds “to the greatest extent possible, provide job training, employment, and contract opportunities for low- or very low-income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods.”

I recommend that a similar provision be attached to highway, transit, and other infrastructure programs under the jurisdiction of this committee. And when I say “jobs,” I mean job training, internships, mentorships, apprenticeships, and vendor opportunities, among other things.

We can work with stakeholders to make this happen in labor, Government, workforce development boards, and the nonprofit sectors. I urge the committee to take advantage of this generational opportunity. Not only can we help create and support better transportation investments, but also create real career pathways to good-paying jobs that will create hope and income long after the last construction contract has been let.

According to a Pew Research Center survey, providing more substantial public transit funding is required to build equity into our Nation’s transportation options. Indeed, Black and Brown populations disproportionately depend on public transit to access employment opportunities to meet the everyday transportation needs. Today, 38 percent of Black and Hispanic citizens say that they take public transportation, compared to 7 percent of our White citizens in the United States. In my city, over the last decade, public transit service lines have been cut, and fare prices increased, and this has hurt the most vulnerable, while also making it harder to get to work, especially as that work has moved outside the city that is not polluted, and outside the city center.

We need a new highway bill that reverses this pattern of disinvestment to allow our local communities the ability to support viable and strong public transit networks, including to reach major employment centers. Historically, public transit has been the stepchild of the Highway Trust Fund, with the historic split of 80–20 of trust fund revenues. In an era of equity, it is time we rethink that split, and begin to ensure a more robust investment in public transportation and in greening and cleaning our environment. I hope that the committee will use this opportunity to address the need to update the funding split, to expedite the pace in which we invest in historically underfunded transportation.

Again, environmental justice is another area that we need to look at in terms of equity, not only in cleaning up these environmental disasters in these communities, but providing training and job opportunities for those people affected to participate in the wealth that can be—and job opportunities created in cleaning up, and building back better, and participating in these transportation projects.

I could go on and on, but I am chastened by the gavel. And I just want to thank you all for your attention and giving me the opportunity to share my vision of building back better today.

And I will yield back and remain here for any questions.

[Ms. Moore’s prepared statement follows:]



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Gwen Moore, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Wisconsin**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

I appreciate the opportunity to testify today about our nation's infrastructure priorities and the upcoming reauthorization of our highway and transit programs. As you know, President Biden's infrastructure and jobs plan details a number of important priorities to address transportation and infrastructure needs and put our citizens back to work.

I commend the President's ambitious proposal. As this Committee works on putting together the specifics of this package and the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization, I wanted to outline some priorities that should guide this work.

EQUITY

Workforce Development—Mr. Chairman and members of this Committee, I know you will receive much input and hear many concerns from members in this body. My hope is that in all discussion regarding the types of projects funded, the way that funding is allocated, and the people and workers involved in the construction of those projects, you hold equity as a guiding principle.

No one package can solve every problem, but by centering the needs of those most impacted, we can be sure that this package will not work against our goals of Building Back Better for everyone.

A priority of mine is making sure needed infrastructure investments promote equity throughout. I think it is important to note that the communities who suffer the most as a result of previous highway policies and aging transit and water infrastructure also face the highest levels of poverty and unemployment, and other forms of discrimination based on social status, race, and income level.

In the upcoming highway and transit reauthorization and any future infrastructure package, I request that you ensure that these investments create real and sustainable pathways for minority and underserved communities to work on projects funded through the bill. This must include directly tying transportation investments to the creation of jobs in the targeting communities, such as those laid out in Section 3 of the Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968. That provision requires that recipients of HUD funds, "to the greatest extent possible, provide job training, employment, and contract opportunities for low- or very-low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhoods." I recommend that a similar provision be attached to highway, transit, and other infrastructure programs under the jurisdiction of this committee.

And when I say jobs, I mean job training, internships, mentorships, and apprenticeships, among others. We can work with stakeholders to make this happen.

I urge the Committee to take advantage of this opportunity. Not only can we help create and support better transportation investments, but also create real career pathways to good paying jobs that will create hope (and income) long after the last construction cone has gone away.

Environmental Justice—In the same vein, there are many ways that this package can address the myriad environmental injustices experienced by minority and low-income communities.

Black and brown populations disproportionately depend on public transit to access employment opportunities and to meet the everyday transportation needs. Today, 38% of Black and Hispanic citizens say they take public transportation compared to just 7% of white people in the United States, according to a Pew Research Center survey.¹

Providing more substantial public transit funding is required to build equity into our nation's transportation options, and to support the communities who are already most vulnerable to the environmental and climate hazards this package aims to address.

In my city, over the last decade, public transit has seen service cuts and fare reductions that have hurt the most vulnerable the most while also making it harder to get to work, especially as work has moved outside the city center. We need a new highway bill that reverses this pattern of disinvestment to allow our local communities the ability to support viable and strong public transit networks, including to reach major employment centers.

Additionally, attention to environmental justice in this package would mean that all federally funded transportation projects not only center the needs of the commu-

¹Pew Research Center, Apr. 7, 2016, "Who relies on public transit in the U.S.," <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/04/07/who-relies-on-public-transit-in-the-u-s/>

nities they are impacting, but also adequately address any concerns they may have with the project. Meaningful engagement and ability to voice concerns on transportation projects has been a fallacy for many inner city and other communities that have often been pushed to the side whenever discussion about how to meet a community's transportation needs are brought up, even in the NEPA process.

Equity and environmental justice require this bill to give all communities a real voice in the transportation planning, project development, and alternatives development process. We should not use the guise of expediting projects to eliminate meaningful engagement of communities of color into these efforts. This bill should elevate engagement as a deliberate and intentional policy choice.

I ask that this Committee focus your solutions through an Environmental Justice lens. We cannot afford for the solutions we embrace to perpetuate any further harm on those who have already suffered so much at the hands of racially blind and discriminatory infrastructure investments.

MILWAUKEE PRIORITIES

In Milwaukee, we have many significant infrastructure needs that could benefit from the package this Committee produces.

Water Infrastructure—In addition to working with other relevant committees on replacing and repairing harmful lead piping and other aging drinking water infrastructure, matters about which we've already spoken Mr. Chairman, we also need greater investment in wastewater and stormwater management.

Milwaukee is facing increasingly frequent 500-year flooding events as both summer and winter storms increase in frequency due to Climate Change. These storms come at steep cost, not only to our public infrastructure, but also to our federal government as FEMA disaster loans are issued to help our citizens recover.

In January 2020, a winter storm caused more than \$4.1 million of damage at Port Milwaukee. This was on top of the \$3.1 million worth of damage caused by a Derecho on the Summer of 2019.

Our waste and storm water management infrastructure, both man-made and green, must be maintained or, in most cases, improved to make Milwaukee more resilient to these extreme weather events.

Separately, as this Committee looks at funding highway projects, I also support the inclusion of "Dig Once" provisions that would require an assessment of the water and other infrastructure needs underneath the roadway being torn up. This would expedite the speed at which our infrastructure needs are addressed and ensure we do not double or triple the costs of projects by paving and reconstructing roadways unnecessarily.

Public Transit and Highways—Historically, public transit has been the stepchild of the highway trust fund with a historic split of 80/20% of trust fund revenues. In an era of equity, it's time we rethink that split and begin to ensure a more robust investment in public transportation. I hope the Committee will use this opportunity to address the need to update the funding split to expedite the pace at which we invest in historically underfunded public transportation projects.

In Milwaukee County, going to work or employment related activities are the number one reason cited for bus ridership.

Transit equity means not only maintaining existing highway infrastructure, which in many cases was built over and through minority communities, but also substantially, thoroughly, and aggressively funding the public transportation projects these communities desperately need to access gainful employment and live their everyday lives.

It also means rethinking the structure by which environmental impact studies are conducted for highway and transit projects to ensure these communities are not further harmed or displaced by these projects. In some cases, it may even mean tearing down highways as they are no longer needed. In all cases this must be done with full input from the affected community and ensure that all alternatives, including transit options, are really considered rather than just the need to check a box.

As this committee increases its investment in public transportation, greater funding is needed to support the adoption of electric buses and the related charging infrastructures to help us get to a cleaner fleet. Unfortunately, for local and state governments, such projects are cost prohibitive except for the largest providers. In the FAST Act, this committee took a step forward with a new competitive grant program to promote zero and low-emission buses and I urge the committee to strongly build on that foundation in the upcoming bill.

Lastly, in closing,

Among specific Milwaukee's priorities are:

- An expansion of our streetcar system, The Hop, which would provide greater connectivity to minority communities who were not connected during the system's original concept. Again, demonstrate the need for strong federal funding for transit so that localities can pursue opportunities such as the HOP.
- Support for bus rapid transit routes to provide improved service and shorter trip times to the communities in the center of Milwaukee County. Last year, the FTA signed off on the first bus rapid transit route in Wisconsin which begins in my district and connects to a major/health complex and employer in the near suburbs. These kinds of projects make sense and I know my community can benefit from additional such investments.
- Increased funding to protect transit operators. Assaults against these men and women continue and we need to do more to protect them.
- Increased funding to help overcome COVID-19 transit budget shortfalls due to lower ridership/fare collection. The committee should look at allowing larger transit operators to be able to use federal funding to support operating costs.

Electric Vehicles—Additionally, I know that the deployment of EV charging infrastructure is a major consideration in the upcoming bill. As this committee is developing policy to support this deployment, I would urge you to ensure that affordable and fast EV charging infrastructure, electric grid improvements, and battery recycling programs are distributed, not just equally, but also equitably, across all communities. Charging stations shouldn't skip zip codes or parts of town.

In a city as diverse and racially segregated as Milwaukee, we have seen how expanded access to new technologies can benefit the wealthy few at the top, while leaving the vulnerable many at the bottom.

Mr. KAHELE. Mahalo, Ms. Moore.

Ms. MOORE. Yes.

Mr. KAHELE. This concludes today's hearing. I want to again thank all of my colleagues who took the time to testify today.

I ask for unanimous consent that the record of today's hearing remain open until such time as our witnesses have provided answers to any questions that may be submitted to them in writing.

I also ask unanimous consent that the record remain open for 15 days for any additional comments and information submitted by Members or witnesses to be included in the record of today's hearing.

Without objection, so ordered.

The committee stands adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 4:53 p.m., the committee was adjourned.]

SUBMISSIONS FOR THE RECORD

Letter of April 14, 2021, from the Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference et al., Submitted for the Record by Hon. Troy Balderson

APRIL 14, 2021.

Hon. MARIA CANTWELL,
Chair,
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
Hon. PETER DEFAZIO,
Chair,
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.
Hon. ROGER WICKER,
Ranking Member,
Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation.
Hon. SAM GRAVES,
Ranking Member,
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

DEAR CHAIRS CANTWELL AND DEFAZIO, AND RANKING MEMBERS WICKER AND GRAVES:

As the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation and the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure begin their work on a major infrastructure legislative package and/or surface transportation reauthorization bill, the more than 100 undersigned organizations write to express strong support for the DRIVE-Safe Act (S. 659, H.R. 1745), and to urge its inclusion in the forthcoming legislation. This strongly bipartisan legislation, which garnered the support of more than one third of the House and Senate in the 116th Congress, will address the nation's growing truck driver shortage by promoting opportunity and enhanced safety training for emerging members of the transportation workforce.

Although 49 states and the District of Columbia currently allow individuals under the age of 21 to obtain a commercial driver's license and operate in intrastate commerce, these same individuals are prohibited from driving a truck across state lines until they turn 21. The DRIVE-Safe Act would change this through a rigorous two-step apprenticeship program that creates a path for these drivers to enter the industry. As the name implies, however, the legislation's first priority is safety. In order to qualify, candidates must complete at least 400 hours of additional training—more than what is required for any other CDL holder in the nation.

Seventy percent of the nation's freight is carried by commercial trucks, and while demand is projected to increase over the next decade, the threat posed by the driver shortage stands to disrupt the continuity of the supply chain. This is especially problematic as the nation and our economy recover from the monumental impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent estimate, the trucking industry needs an additional 60,800 truck drivers immediately—a deficit that is expected to grow to more than 160,000 by 2028. In fact, when anticipated driver retirement numbers are combined with the expected growth in capacity, the trucking industry will need to hire roughly 1.1 million new drivers over the next decade, or an average of nearly 110,000 per year. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the truck driver shortage, and the temporary closures of state DMV's and truck driver training schools dried up the already fragile pipeline of new drivers entering the trucking industry. And as a result of the already-crippling driver shortage, companies in supply chains across the economy are facing higher transportation costs, leading to increased prices for consumers on everything from electronics to food.

As a testament to the safety considerations underpinning the DRIVE-Safe Act, all qualified drivers who participate in the apprenticeship program established by the bill would only be allowed to drive trucks outfitted with the latest safety technology, including active braking collision mitigation systems, forward-facing event recording

cameras, speed limiters set at 65 miles per hour or less, and automatic or automatic manual transmissions. Professional drivers training within the program are also required to be accompanied by an experienced driver throughout the process.

The DRIVE-Safe Act will help our nation's freight continue to move while preserving and enhancing the safety of our highway system. It will help fill desperately-needed jobs and provide younger Americans with the opportunity to enter a profession with a median salary of \$54,585, plus health and retirement benefits. And it will bolster and support our nation's supply chain, which is an issue of heightened urgency as our nation recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your attention and thoughtful consideration of this important and timely legislation. We look forward to working with you to include the DRIVE-Safe Act in your Committees' forthcoming infrastructure legislation and/or surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Sincerely,

Agricultural and Food Transporters Conference.
Agricultural Retailers Association.
Arcot.
American Apparel & Footwear Association.
American Bakers Association.
American Beverage Association.
American Chemistry Council.
American Coatings Association.
American Feed Industry Association.
American Forest and Paper Association.
American Foundry Society.
American Frozen Food Institute.
American Supply Association.
American Trucking Associations.
AmericanHort.
Arkansas Beverage Association.
Associated Equipment Distributors.
Association for Hose and Accessories Distribution.
Auto Care Association.
Beverage Association of Tennessee.
Brick Industry Association.
Coalition of Franchise Associations.
Colorado Beverage Association.
Commercial Vehicle Training Association.
Consumer Brands Association.
Convenience Distribution Association.
Cotton Growers Warehouse Association.
Energy Marketers of America.
Equipment Services Association.
FedEx.
Florida Beverage Association.
Fluid Power Distributors Association.
FMI—The Food Industry Association.
Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association.
Forest Resources Association.
Franchise Business Services.
Gases and Welding Distributors Association.
Georgia Beverage Association.
Hardwood Federation.
Heating, Air-Conditioning, & Refrigeration Distributors International.
Home Depot.
Hoosier Beverage Association.
Institute of Shortening and Edible Oils.
Intermodal Association of North America.

Intermodal Motor Carriers Conference.
International Association of Plastics Distribution.
International Bottled Water Association.
International Dairy Foods Association.
International Foodservice Distributors Association.
International Sealing Distribution Association.
International Warehouse Logistics Association.
Maine Beverage Association.
Metals Service Center Institute.
Michigan Soft Drink Association.
National Aquaculture Association.
National Association of Manufacturers.
National Association of Sporting Goods Wholesalers.
National Association of Truckstop Operators.
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors.
National Automatic Merchandising Association.
National Beer Wholesalers Association.
National Cotton Council.
National Council of Chain Restaurants.
National Council of Farmer Cooperatives.
National Energy & Fuels Institute.
National Fastener Distributors Association.
National Franchise Association.
National Grain and Feed Association.
National Grocers Association.
National Milk Producers Federation.
National Oilseed Processors Association.
National Onion Association.
National Pork Producers Council.
National Private Truck Council.
National Propane Gas Association.
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association.
National Restaurant Association.
National Retail Federation.
National Stone, Sand and Gravel Association.
National Tank Truck Carriers.
Nestlé.
New Hampshire Beverage Association.
North American Meat Institute.
North American Millers' Association.
North American Renderers Association.

<i>North Carolina Beverage Association.</i>	<i>Specialty Soya & Grains Alliance.</i>
<i>Ohio Beverage Association.</i>	<i>The Fertilizer Institute.</i>
<i>Pet Food Institute.</i>	<i>Tire Industry Association.</i>
<i>Pet Industry Distributors Association.</i>	<i>Transportation Intermediaries</i>
<i>Plumbing Manufacturers International.</i>	<i>Association.</i>
<i>Portland Cement Association.</i>	<i>Truck Renting and Leasing Association.</i>
<i>Power Transmission Distributors</i>	<i>Truckload Carriers Association.</i>
<i>Association.</i>	<i>United Fresh Produce Association.</i>
<i>PRINTING United Alliance.</i>	<i>United States Cattlemen's Association.</i>
<i>Retail Industry Leaders Association.</i>	<i>UPS.</i>
<i>Retail Packaging Association.</i>	<i>U.S. Chamber of Commerce.</i>
<i>Rural & Agriculture Council of America.</i>	<i>Virginia Beverage Association.</i>
<i>Security Hardware Distributors</i>	<i>Walmart.</i>
<i>Association.</i>	<i>Water and Sewer Distributors of</i>
<i>Service Station Dealers of America and</i>	<i>America.</i>
<i>Allied Trades.</i>	<i>Wholesale Florist and Florist Supplier</i>
<i>SNAC International.</i>	<i>Association.</i>
<i>Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers</i>	<i>Wine and Spirits Wholesalers of America.</i>
<i>Association.</i>	<i>Wisconsin Beverage Association.</i>

CC: Members of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sanford D. Bishop, Jr., a Representative in
Congress from the State of Georgia**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to discuss the infrastructure needs of Georgia and the nation. The importance of investing in our infrastructure cannot be understated. Infrastructure is the physical framework upon which our economy operates and which our standard of living is dependent upon. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that the 10-year infrastructure investment gap now stands at \$2.6 trillion. We must take bold and decisive action now.

Deteriorating infrastructure across rural America threatens our position as a world leader in agriculture. The ability of our farmers and ranchers to meet domestic demands and compete globally depends on reliable infrastructure. I urge you to include robust funding for state Departments of Transportation so that our municipalities have the resources needed to improve our local roads, bridges, ports, and railways.

As you develop surface reauthorization and infrastructure legislation, we must also look to the future by continuing our leadership in clean energy technology. In the recently unveiled American Jobs Plan, President Biden set a goal to electrify at least 20 percent of our yellow school bus fleet. I urge the Committee to create a new grant program for local school districts to replace existing diesel school buses with electric school buses. A new grant program should be separate from the existing Diesel Emissions Reduction Act grants so that our schools have a dedicated revenue source to upgrade their school bus fleet. Schools with limited financial resources, particularly those in rural areas, do not have the financial resources to replace existing school buses without significant federal support. We must ensure that these schools have access to utilize a new grant program for electric school bus purchases.

Investment in clean energy infrastructure also requires a reliable charging station network across the country. Building a network of green infrastructure will require cooperation and partnerships between the federal government and private sector. I support President Biden's proposal to jumpstart clean energy manufacturing through federal procurement.

Additionally, significant investment is needed to ensure that every American has access to high speed broadband. More than 35 percent of rural Americans lack access to broadband at minimally acceptable speeds. I urge you to include investment in the infrastructure needed to close the digital divide. However, even with this investment, it will take years to connect every American to high speed and affordable broadband. We should provide immediate financial support by creating a refundable consumer tax credit for the purchase of a signal booster, mobile hotspot, or satellite equipment to boost internet speeds while we continue to build our broadband infrastructure.

Finally, I ask that you consider inclusion of a pilot program that would increase safety on roads and help mitigate climate pollution. This program would allow a limited number of states to permit operation of vehicles weighing up to 91,000

pounds gross vehicle weight with six axles on federal interstates. Allowing trucks to carry at this modestly higher gross vehicle weight, with a sixth axle for bridge formula compliance, will reduce greenhouse gas emissions, made roads safer for families and drivers, and minimize congestion on state and local roads. The CARES Act allowed states to issue temporary permits for trucks to operate above federal weight limits on the Interstate Highway System, easing strains on the supply chain. Data from these permits showed that the heavier configuration reduced carbon dioxide emissions and saved thousands of gallons of diesel and miles traveled without any corresponding increase in reportable accidents.

We have the opportunity to create millions of jobs for hardworking Americans by making a historic infrastructure investment. I believe that it is incumbent upon Congress to come together and pass bipartisan legislation that invests in our local communities at this time of great need. Thank you for your consideration.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Ted Budd, a Representative in Congress from the State of North Carolina

Good morning Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, thank you for the opportunity to speak before this committee today. Let me begin by saying that, unlike some of my colleagues you've heard from today, I am not here to request any earmarks.

Earmarks are a corrupting influence and act as "the gateway drug for overspending," as the late-Senator Tom Coburn said. Earmarks are loved by lobbyists and career politicians, and hated by government watchdogs and taxpayers. I am disappointed the Democrats have brought back the pork-barrel earmark system that will only further add to the mounting national debt.

Instead of requesting earmarks, we should enact legislation like the Generating American Income and Infrastructure Now (GAIIN) Act. This bill would require the government to actually sell off parts of its debt and distribute the proceeds to low-income communities below the national poverty line for infrastructure projects that would directly improve their economic viability. This bill is a fiscally responsible way to invest in infrastructure while also promoting workforce development.

In the same vein, I ask that the committee include my Fair and Open Competition Act, H.R. 1284, in the surface transportation bill. This bill prevents federal agencies and recipients of federal assistance from requiring contractors to sign controversial project labor agreements (PLAs) as a condition of winning a construction contract. This would ensure that taxpayer funded construction contracts are awarded through fair and open competition. This guarantees the best value for hardworking taxpayers by prohibiting a rigged federal procurement process that discriminates against many small construction businesses. Many of the bill's 45 cosponsors have signed onto a letter asking the committee to include this proposal. I will be delivering this letter later today.

I also ask the committee to preserve the previous Administration's National Environmental Policy Act regulations and One Federal Decision policy. Last summer, the Trump Administration released the first revised NEPA regulations in over 40 years. The old rules increased the time and cost for federally-funded infrastructure projects. The reformed regulations will speed up the notoriously slow environmental review process.

The One Federal Decision policy consolidated permitting and authorization decisions into one process and provides deadlines to reduce delays and cut through the red tape. I constantly hear from state and local stakeholders about how NEPA regulations and agency reviews slow down the process to get projects up and running. It is unacceptable for vital infrastructure programs to be delayed by years of bureaucratic red tape. I am glad the last Administration understood this and implemented a goal to complete environmental reviews in two years or less.

Solutions like the GAIIN Act, the Fair and Open Competition Act, NEPA reform, and the One Federal Decision policy will reduce costs and speed up infrastructure projects. I urge you to include these reforms within the surface transportation reauthorization bill.

We need to get back to basics. Let's fix our country's infrastructure by removing red tape, efficiently and effectively planning projects, competitively bidding them, and getting shovels into the ground. That way, taxpayers will know that they are getting the best bang for their buck. At the end of the day, it's not our money, it's the people's money. I look forward to working with my colleagues on the proposals I mentioned today.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I yield back.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Tony Cárdenas, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Thank you Chair Peter DeFazio, Ranking Member Sam Graves, and the Committee members for the opportunity to allow me to testify on Member Designated Project funding opportunities in my district.

I proudly serve the Northeast San Fernando Valley communities, including Panorama City, Pacoima, Arleta, North Hollywood, Van Nuys, and Sylmar. Wedged between major freeways like the 405, 5, and 210, many hardworking individuals spend hours in traffic and away from their families to work in the service industry over the hill to downtown Los Angeles. Growing up in the Valley, it was not uncommon to see family members and neighbors wake up before dawn to carpool to their destination, whether it be in healthcare to nurse our youth and the elderly, to build our infrastructure and create new public spaces, to clean homes and watch over our little ones, or to prepare and serve our food in some of the most visited restaurants. These frontline workers, who contribute and sacrifice to keep us healthy, fed, and safe, deserve our support for projects that provide the most significant mobility, accessibility, connectivity, and ease.

One such Project at the tip of California's Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) is the East San Fernando Valley Light Rail Transit Project. This vital public transit infrastructure investment will provide improved transit service along the busy Van Nuys Boulevard and San Fernando Road corridors serving the eastern San Fernando Valley. The Project will provide connections to key destinations and more excellent transit users opportunities to connect to the growing transit network in the San Fernando Valley with destinations to downtown Los Angeles.

I also plan to submit and support requests that mitigate traffic congestions, cool down our hot streets, provide greater pedestrian safety by identifying High Injury Network streets with a significant concentration of severe injuries and deaths, and lastly, explore opportunities to erect sound walls in our most distressed communities to improve quality of life by reducing the freeway's impact on the surrounding neighborhoods.

With the tremendous local support for these priorities, I welcome the committee's continued guidance in moving forward these requests, passing it out of the House, and getting it to the President's desk.

Thank you.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Matt Cartwright, a Representative in Congress
from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

Thank you for allowing me to let the Committee know my surface transportation priorities.

I greatly appreciate the Committee's Member Designated Projects process this year, and, at this time, I am working closely with state and local officials to identify transportation projects that will benefit the citizens of Pennsylvania's Eighth Congressional District, which includes all or a portion of five different Northeastern Pennsylvania counties. I am proud of the strides that local transportation stakeholders have made to bolster the road, bridge, and transit infrastructure in my congressional district, which contains several cities, such as Scranton, Wilkes-Barre, and Hazleton, several transit agencies that serve a large geographic area, hundreds of bridges over its lakes, rivers, and creeks, and multiple Interstate, U.S., and State Highways that carry commuters to the Lehigh Valley and southeastern Pennsylvania, northern New Jersey and New York City, and western Pennsylvania and the Midwest. There is much work to be done to improve transportation in my district, and the ability through the Committee to direct some federal dollars to help complete critical projects will have significant benefits. Although I continue to work to finalize the projects I will submit for the Committee's consideration, there are a few areas that I wish to highlight.

The County of Lackawanna Transit System (COLTS) is in great need of a renovated headquarters and new maintenance facility. This project will be funded primarily by money from the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT). COLTS represents an invaluable piece of the transit picture in my district, providing safe, affordable, and convenient public transportation throughout Lackawanna County. The last major renovation of the headquarters building occurred more than thirty-five years ago. In this time, the facility has suffered its share of

wear and tear, and an overhaul is much needed to promote efficient operations. The new project design also places the maintenance area away from the administrative section of the building, which is a necessary safety alteration to the complex.

I also strongly support Lackawanna County's Main Street project, revitalizing the major, north-south "spine" route through the valley section of the county. There is a great need to ease traffic flow and encourage economic development along this corridor.

In Luzerne County, there are transit improvement needs as well, including city of Hazleton Public Transit (HPT) system proposal to replace diesel buses with compressed natural gas (CNG) buses. In addition to the benefits to the environment and quality of life that will result from increased ridership on these more comfortable and up-to-date public transportation options, CNG has much lower carbon content than diesel and other petroleum-based products and produces 20–30% fewer greenhouse gas emissions and 95% fewer tailpipe emissions than diesel. Hazleton Public Transit also needs to purchase land to create a park-and-ride lot to supplement the very limited parking currently available to customers of HPT and intercity buses. This, too, will increase ridership and result in obvious environmental benefits such as reduced traffic and emissions as well as benefits to riders, such as cost savings, reduced stress, and increased productivity. Resurfacing, re-signaling, and bridge replacement is also a priority for Luzerne County routes.

In Monroe County, there are multiple road and intersection improvement projects that need to be executed, including a project with Route 115, which I am happy to see has begun to see increased economic development spring up around it. Unfortunately, this development has resulted in a notorious bottleneck, and a widening project there will increase traffic flow and result in a safer stretch of highway for commuters in Monroe County.

In Pike and Wayne Counties there are numerous roadway resurfacing and bridge reconstruction projects, two of which are a problematic section of Route 590, which needs resurfaced for safety improvement, and a Lackawaxen River bridge replacement. I am looking to the Committee to assist in directing funds to a number of such critical projects in northeastern Pennsylvania.

I additionally strongly support the Committee including many of the national funding priorities and policy improvements previously found in the surface transportation portion of the Moving Forward Act, H.R. 2, from the 116th Congress. We need to deliver better roads and bridges with as much speed as we can, including repairing tens of thousands of structurally deficient bridges across the country. We also must urgently increase transit options and efficiency to in order to reduce the number of cars on our commuter highways—and also reduce their aggregate emissions. We must address bottlenecks and gridlock on existing roadways, and we need to make all of our transportation infrastructure more resilient. The Committee's surface transportation authorization legislation in the previous Congress wisely addressed these challenges, and I urge a continuation of that effort this year.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Gerald E. Connolly, a Representative in
Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Thank you to Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for hosting this Member Day hearing for the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This committee has important work ahead of it in the 117th Congress, and I appreciate the opportunity to testify on some of our shared priorities.

As the Chairman of the Government Operations Subcommittee for the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, my subcommittee shares jurisdiction with this committee on some critical areas such as federal real property management by the General Services Administration and of course the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA).

On federal real property, one of the issues we have collaborated on is the plan for a new headquarters for the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) to replace the current Hoover building. As you know, the Trump Administration derailed a plan to develop a new suburban consolidated headquarters for the FBI and proposed a redevelopment of the existing Hoover building, which also required sending thousands of FBI positions to locations in Idaho, West Virginia, and Alabama. My subcommittee initiated an investigation of that decision that discovered the plan proposed by the Trump Administration was more costly than the original plan despite Administration representations to Congress that it would be less expensive. The Inspector General for GSA found that the Administration obscured \$516 million in project costs in its proposal to Congress, that the President was personally involved

in the development of the new, more expensive proposal despite having a clear conflict of interest, that then-GSA Administrator Emily Murphy misled Congress in her testimony about the President's involvement, and that physical security requirements were not fully resolved as part of the new urban proposal. The consolidated appropriations bill passed at the end of the 116th Congress (P.L. 116-260) gave the current Administration 90 days to produce a prospectus for a new FBI headquarters project. The deadline was not met, and working with Chairwoman Titus we must continue to push the Administration to get this project back on track to deliver a safe and state-of-the-art new headquarters for the FBI.

As an aside, I have a bill that has been referred to this committee which would rename the Hoover building (H.R. 1290), and I hope the Committee would act on this proposal to ensure Mr. Hoover, who was a bigot and malign character in American history, no longer occupies this place of honor.

I also look forward to continuing my work with Chairwoman Norton on oversight of WMATA to ensure that the transit backbone of the nation's capital is safe and reliable. The federal government has a unique responsibility to support WMATA operations given the role it plays transporting the federal workforce and providing critical disaster response support for federal government operations. My legislation, the Metro Accountability and Investment Act (MAIA, H.R. 694) would reauthorize and enhance the existing dedicated annual federal funding contribution contingent upon important accountability reforms that have been developed in collaboration with Chairwoman Norton and this committee. I want to thank the Committee for including this bill in the Moving Forward Act (116th, H.R. 2), which passed the House in 2020. I hope we can build on that success in this Congress as part of a comprehensive infrastructure push.

Finally, I would like to address the critical role this Committee will play enacting the proposed American Jobs Plan and advancing other urgent infrastructure needs in the 117th Congress.

Under President Biden, we have an opportunity to make transformative investments in our nation's roads, bridges, electric grid, transit systems, research and development, drinking water, schools and childcare, housing, broadband networks, manufacturing, and green economy. The \$2.5 trillion American Jobs Plan is an early down payment on a promise to build back the American economy as it recovers from the COVID-19 pandemic. I especially look forward to working with this committee to craft parameters for the proposed \$10 billion investment in the modernization, sustainability, and resilience of the federal buildings. And as I previously testified to the Ways and Means Committee, we must revive the successful Build American Bonds program through a new direct subsidy bonds program that will provide much-needed financing for state and local infrastructure investment.

It would be difficult to quantify the return on investment of the interstate highway system, an initiative spurred by President Dwight D. Eisenhower and authorized by Congress in 1956 to build 40,000 miles of roads. That relatively modest initiative has given rise to entire industries and provoked innovation that defined the American century. The infrastructure investment Congress made as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) after the Great Recession had among the highest returns on investment among the bill's stimulus provisions. In 1960, federal infrastructure spending was 5 percent of GDP. By 2017, American investment in infrastructure had declined to 2.3 percent of GDP, an all-time low. We must reverse this decline. Our global competitors, especially China, are increasing their investments in infrastructure building new airports, connecting cities with high-speed rail, and adopting green technology as part of a more sustainable future. For the sake of a robust economic recovery and our nation's long-term global competitiveness bold initiatives like the American Jobs Plan should be just the beginning of our reinvestment in America agenda.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Charlie Crist, a Representative in Congress from the State of Florida

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

As the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure does the vital work of re-authorizing surface transportation projects, I urge you prioritize the following endeavors.

BEACH NOURISHMENT EASEMENTS

I am seeking a modification to the Army Corps' easement requirement for Shore Protection Projects. Specifically, I am seeking an exemption to the easement re-

quirement for areas where sand will not be placed for a planned project, or has not been placed since 1996, the year the Corps released guidance on WDRA 1986.

My district is home to the Pinellas County Shore Protection Project that encompasses nearly 13 miles of beaches over three segments and has been a model partnership between the federal, state, and local governments. This public safety project is vital to Florida's economy, environment, and way of life. Pinellas beaches support a thriving tourism industry; promote recreational opportunities; and protect lives, endangered local wildlife, and infrastructure from devastating storm surge.

Despite completing multiple nourishment cycles over several decades, the Army Corps informed Pinellas County that local officials must obtain perpetual easements along the length of the project from 100 percent of property owners in order to be eligible for the next scheduled nourishment in 2024. Together with the Corps' Jacksonville District, the County and local municipalities have been working hard for over two years to obtain these easements.

Unfortunately, due to understandable skepticism from some property owners, the County remains short of meeting this requirement. Notably, a majority of the remaining required easements are located well into the sand dunes where sand won't be placed for the planned project (see below image).



Also of note, Florida is unique among states as the State Legislature in law has designated an Erosion Control Line (ECL) that clearly delineates the public and private segments of our beaches. While I understand the requirement to obtain easements from property owners where sand will be placed on the private side of the state-mandated line, where I disagree with the Army Corps is the need to obtain easements for those segments of the project where sand will only be placed on the public side of the ECL, as is the case here, because public access in these areas is already guaranteed by state law.

Allowing the Pinellas Shore Protection Project to lapse would have far-reaching and significant economic consequences. Pinellas beaches contribute not only to Tampa Bay's regional economy, not only to the state's economy, but to the entire country's economy. In fact, Pinellas beaches are annually ranked as some of the best in the country. Earlier this year, TripAdvisor named St. Pete Beach as the nation's top beach and included Clearwater Beach, Madeira Beach, and Treasure Island on its Top 20 list. Furthermore, in 2020, despite the pandemic, Pinellas County drew 12.5 million visitors, creating an economic impact of \$5.8 billion and supporting over 65,000 jobs within the County. It is clear that Pinellas beaches and the recreational opportunities they provide draw visitors from well beyond Florida, and even beyond the United States.

Even more alarming, the degradation of Pinellas' beaches could result in loss of life and significant property damage from storms and other flooding events. Nourished beaches provide critical protection from the impacts of storm surge. Without a wide, sandy beach to serve as a buffer, lives would be lost, property and infrastructure would be destroyed, and post-disaster costs for the federal government would skyrocket. Not only is this an incredibly dangerous situation for the people

who live and work along Pinellas' coast, but this directly contradicts the very purpose of the Army Corps' Shore Protection Program.

It is unacceptable that the Pinellas County Shore Protection Project be placed at risk due to a sudden change in Corps policy, especially after completing multiple successful nourishment cycles prior to instatement of the easement requirement. For this reason, I urge the Committee to examine the Corps' arduous and inconsistent easement policy and provide flexibility to non-federal sponsors as outlined above.

EVERGLADES

I also urge the Committee to include Everglades restoration in an upcoming infrastructure package, allowing for the speedy completion of projects that are critical to a restored and healthy Everglades ecosystem.

The Everglades is central to Florida's environment and economy. It is the source of drinking water for eight million Floridians and serves as both a short- and long-term job creator. Based on Army Corps calculations, between 65,000 and 70,000 jobs would be created over four years if the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program receives full funding for authorized construction projects that are part of the integrated delivery schedule. In addition, this unique ecosystem attracts millions of visitors every year from around the world. In 2019, the Greater Everglades National Parks attracted almost 3 million visitors and contributed \$238 million to the economy.

The Everglades also provides important climate benefits to the surrounding communities, including protecting Florida's aquifers from saltwater intrusion and serving as a natural buffer to storm surge. The Everglades is also a biodiversity hotspot, providing habitat for over 180 endangered or threatened species.

Given the emphasis this Committee is placing on sustainable, climate-resilient infrastructure, and the importance of this national treasure to our environment and economy, I firmly believe that the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration program deserves to be included as infrastructure in an upcoming package.

MULTI-MODAL MOBILITY

Car-sharing is a new, green, affordable form of modern mobility that allows people to connect multiple forms of efficient transportation and rent cars as they need them. When cars are shared, there don't need to be as many on the road, which means fewer accidents, reduced traffic, lowered emissions, and less space needed for parking. Supporting car-sharing efforts can improve mobility, relieve congestion, help our environment, and make public transit easier to use.

I encourage the Committee to support the establishment of multi-modal mobility hubs, particularly in underserved areas, and consider incentives for the purchase and use of shared vehicles, and the manufacturing or incorporation of connected car sharing technologies.

COAST GUARD JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

Recently, I introduced the bipartisan Commandant of the Coast Guard to Joint Chiefs of Staff Act, H.R. 2136, because it's time the Coast Guard has a seat at the Joint Chiefs table. This an opportunity to promote to Coast Guard Commandant to full voting membership on the Joint Chiefs, the only military service chief currently excluded. The Coast Guard is providing significant operational and strategic capabilities and perspective to keep our domestic and international waterways safe and secure but needs this legislation to provide parity and legitimacy amongst the other Armed Forces. As the committee of jurisdiction, you are well-aware that Coast Guard leadership has growing relevance across not just our maritime transportation system and economy but also in support of our National Defense Strategy and integrated Tri-Service Maritime Strategy, especially against growing strategic competition with China. I encourage the committee to include my bill, H.R. 2136 in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization package.

I thank the Committee for their consideration and their important work on rebuilding our nation's infrastructure during these unprecedented times.



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Danny K. Davis, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Illinois**

Good Morning—Chairman DeFazio/Ranking Member Graves and members of the Transportation Committee. Thank you for hosting this opportunity for me to advocate for transportation interest in the state of Illinois and the Chicagoland area (which is represent); specifically.

Mr. Chairman, it is no secret that Chicago a great connector and transportation hub for rail, airlines, waterways, surface, and transit. Our needs are vast, and our needs are great. Donor states like Illinois don't receive the appropriate share of the federal resources that it pays, and it is indicative of the amount of infrastructure updates and maintenance backlog that is currently needed to maintain the foundation of our modern society. Chicago needs around \$4 billion dollars for infrastructure replacements, and Illinois needs \$40 billion.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the Illinois Infrastructure Grade is a C-.

The ASCE stated, "THE STATE'S INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN ON A STARVATION DIET"

So today, I wanted to touch on some problem areas where adequate infrastructure funding will improve upon this score.

In aviation—Illinois boast the 2nd busiest airport in the nation but also has 115 public use airports—77 of these airports are publicly owned. The aviation capacity will continue to grow with the O'Hare Modernization Program, improved cargo capacity at Rockford International Airport and terminal capacity at Rockford International Airport.

Illinois has the 3rd largest bridge inventory in the nation with roughly 26,775 bridges.

8.6% of these bridges are structurally deficient.

In Chicago, our drinking water is in serious need of immediate resources to replace aging pipes and upgrade our wastewater systems. According to ASCE, in 1900, the average residential use of portable water in the US was 5 gallons per day—per person. Today that number is 100 gallons of water per day—per person.

In a suburban community in my district—Maywood, Illinois—has lost at least 30% of their water costing the residents \$1.66 million due to water main pipe breaks.

Illinois also has 1118 miles of waterways and is the 3rd largest agriculture exporter in the US. The state is the number one exporter of soybeans, soymeal, and vegetable oil.

\$18 billion dollars of Illinois industry products are exported annually via the waterways. Investments in lock facilities and dam modernization is critical to the growth and survival of the state's agricultural industry.

Illinois rail industry has a 7000-mile track network and is the 2nd largest rail network in the country. It is also important to note Illinois is the only state which all Seven Class 1 freight railroads operate.

Nearly one-quarter of the nation's rail-shipped goods and services move through Chicago and more carloads of freight are carried through Illinois than any other state in the U.S.

Chicago is also the single busiest and largest rail city in the nation. Freight and passenger systems like; (Amtrak, Metra & CTA) are the backbone of the city and state economy. The transit system has over 7500 passenger vehicles, over 400 stations and 70 maintenance facilities serving Chicago and hundreds of suburban communities. Modernization of the system will continue to minimize congestion and reduce carbon admissions.

Although I have outlined the vast traditional infrastructure needs—I would like to highlight further needs to be considered.

The bill is an opportunity to modernize housing, expand renewal energy projects, build more EV charging stations in underdeveloped communities, build new affordable housing in many of the blighted communities around the county and specifically westside communities that were left decimated after the King riots and expand broadband availability to underserved communities.

Mr. Chairman, I look forward to working with you the members of the committee on this legislation that will be the catalyst to providing financial equity to places that have been long overlooked in the inner city.

Thank you.



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Sylvia R. Garcia, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Texas**

I proudly rise today as the representative for the 29th district of Texas. Too often, my home district, which is nearly 80% Latino, has had to go without. My neighborhoods and communities have not had that same access to quality transportation and infrastructure, and I am here to advocate for change.

Equitable transit opportunities are vital as we move into the future. As an urban district, we need to continuously look to expand public transit options in new and creative ways. Many of my constituents rely on public transportation, and I want to ensure that they can get around the district and the entire region with ease, comfort, affordability and reliability.

And of course, my constituents deserve the same quality of roads, bridges, and highways as any other region. I encourage the committee to look for opportunities to fund projects that ensure equity and do not disproportionately harm communities of color, and that bring communities together rather than divide them with a highway.

We must also look for innovative new ways to build infrastructure that protects the Houston region from flooding. As we saw in Hurricane Harvey, Houston can be flooded to an extent no where else in the country has experienced. We need to expand our horizons and fund ideas that will protect our families, our homes, and our businesses and our environment. Bold new infrastructure projects can shape the future of our nation, and I look forward to that starting in the 29th district of Texas.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. H. Morgan Griffith, a Representative in
Congress from the Commonwealth of Virginia**

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves:

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to highlight a matter of great importance to my district and the coalfields of Appalachia as you continue to work on issues within this Committee's jurisdiction in the 117th Congress.

The Coalfields Expressway, or U.S. Route 121, is designated a Congressional High Priority Corridor. The Expressway is a proposed four-lane highway that would provide a much needed and more efficient pathway through the coalfields region of Southwest Virginia and Southern West Virginia. By providing safe and rapid access to communities along the corridor, it will greatly improve interstate commerce between disadvantaged portions of Virginia, West Virginia, and Kentucky.

As an area that has been ravaged by economic depression with the exit of much of the coal industry, Southwest Virginia stands to benefit greatly from increased connectivity with our surrounding states, as would Kentucky and West Virginia. This highway could serve as an economic lifeline, bringing in commerce and tourism to the area.

The current roadways that serve the communities and would benefit from the Coalfields Expressway are primarily rural roads, which are not as safe, well maintained, or easy to navigate. For example, Dickenson County, which this highway would run through, is the only county in my district without a four-lane road.

Not only do these challenges make passage for local residents difficult, but they also mean that businesses and through-traffic avoid this region. Our economic development boards struggle to get businesses to even consider the area because of the lack of connectivity to other regions and major highways.

This Expressway would bring much needed commerce to the area and provide residents and travelers from across the country a new and better way to explore Appalachia.

Funding challenges have made the completion of this project difficult. In Virginia, even when the state has received Federal funding for highway projects, those precious Federal dollars are put through a funding formula which favors the more populated regions like Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Norfolk.

I am not against those other regions, but we always hear that we need to reinvent our economy in the coalfields of central Appalachia. To do so, we must have tools such as the Coalfields Expressway.

I am currently exploring possibilities, while avoiding duplication, to advance this project through the new Appropriations process as well as through the authorizing legislation that this Committee will author and would appreciate the support of the Members of this Committee as we work to provide a much-needed lifeline to the people of Southwest Virginia's coalfields.

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Raúl M. Grijalva, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Arizona**

Dear Chair DeFazio:

I appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony to the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. Your leadership in developing the Moving Forward Act (H.R. 2) to address our nation's failing infrastructure has been instrumental in laying the groundwork to *Build Back Better*.

The coronavirus outbreak has had a devastating impact on working families in America, while disproportionately impacting people of color. There is broad consensus that Congress must act to revitalize the economy, and in doing so it can create a more equitable and sustainable future. Our national parks, wildlife refuges, forests, coasts, and tribal and insular areas are facing many infrastructure challenges. We must also invest in nature-based solutions to make our lands and coasts more resilient in the face of climate change.

Thank you for including many of the Natural Resources Committee's priorities in H.R. 2 to preserve public lands, bolster renewable energy, create jobs, fight climate change, protect our coasts, invest in water infrastructure, and provide needed money for tribes and U.S. territories. While many of our priorities are not within your committee's jurisdiction, my staff is ready to assist you and your team as you develop a new infrastructure package. I would like to highlight the following provisions from H.R. 2 that are priorities of mine as a member representing Arizona's 3rd congressional district and the chair of the Natural Resources Committee:

- Sec. 1213. Carbon pollution reduction.
- Section 1303. Grants for charging and fueling infrastructure to modernize and reconnect
- America for the 21st century. *Recommended change: set aside funds for tribal entities under this section.*
- Sec. 1501. Territorial and Puerto Rico highway program.
- Sec. 1502. Tribal transportation program.
- Sec. 1503. Tribal High Priority Projects program.
- Sec. 1504. Federal lands transportation program.
- Sec. 1505. Federal lands and tribal major projects program.
- Sec. 1506. Office of Tribal Government Affairs.
- Sec. 1507. Alternative contracting methods. Allows tribes and federal land management agencies to use the same alternative contracting methods available to states.
- Sec. 1614. Working group on construction resources. *Recommended change: include tribal cultural resource impacts in the findings and recommendations report.*
- Sec. 1618. Construction of certain access and development roads.
- Sec. 1620. Wildlife crossings. *Recommended change: strike state exception language under this section.*
- Sec. 2204. Formula grants for rural areas.
- Sec. 2606. Technical assistance and workforce development.
- Sec. 31122. Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program. *Recommended change: strike five percent and replace with ten percent.*
- Sec. 31141. Additional Broadband Benefit.
- Sec. 33151. Indian Energy.
- Sec. 33162. Report on electricity access and reliability.
- Sec. 22112. Reservation of Funds for Territories of the United States.
- Sec. 33108. Allotment for territories.
- Sec. 40010. Colonias State of Good Repair Grant Program.
- Sec. 81101. Reclamation water settlements fund.
- Sec. 81201–81252. FUTURE Western Water Infrastructure and Drought Resiliency.
- Sec. 81301–81335. Western Water Security.
- Sec. 81411. Water Resources Research Amendments.
- Sec. 81511. Ground water recharge planning.
- Sec. 81611–81612. Tribal Water Infrastructure
- Sec. 82101–82104. Public Lands Telecommunications.
- Sec. 82201–82206. Outdoors for All.
- Sec. 82301. Presidio Trust borrowing authority.
- Sec. 82401. Forest Service Legacy Roads and Trails Remediation Program.
- Sec. 83101. Shovel-Ready Restoration and Resiliency Grant Program.
- Sec. 83102. Living Shoreline Grant Program.

- Sec. 83201–83402. Wildlife Corridors.
- Sec. 84101. Establishment of federal orphaned well remediation program.
- Sec. 84102. Federal bonding reform.
- Sec. 84201–84203. Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act Amendments
- Sec. 84301–84305. Revitalizing the Economy of Coal Communities by Leveraging Local Activities and Investing More.
- Sec. 84501. Offshore Wind Career Training Grant Program.
- Sec. 84601–84604. Community Reclamation Partnerships.
- Sec. 90121. Credit for operations and maintenance costs of government-owned Broadband (§ 6431B).
- Sec. 90404. Elective payment for energy property and electricity produced from certain renewable resources, etc.
- Sec. 90701. Treatment of Indian Tribes as States with respect to bond issuance.
- Sec. 90702. Treatment of Tribal foundations and charities like charities funded and controlled by other governmental funders and sponsors.
- Sec. 90703. New markets tax credit
- Sec. 90801. Extension of Highway Trust Fund expenditure authority (§§ 9503 and 9504).
- Dingell Amendment 139 (made in order and passed). Recovering America's Wildlife.

In addition, I would like to work with you to ensure the following provisions are included in a future infrastructure package:

- *Parks, Jobs, and Equity Program*: authorize the Department of the Interior to establish a grant program to support development of park and outdoor recreation infrastructure in urban areas.
- *Community Climate Restoration Fund*: authorize funding for a grant program to help communities and wildlife adapt to the impacts of climate change through restoration, resilience, and natural infrastructure projects.
- *Civilian Climate Corps*: authorize the Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with other relevant Federal departments and agencies, to establish a Civilian Climate Corps to advance green infrastructure priorities, including the conservation and restoration of public land to promote climate resiliency.
- *Tribal Consultation*: establish procedures for effective consultation and coordination by federal agencies with federally recognized Tribal Governments regarding Federal Government actions that impact tribal lands and interests to ensure that meaningful tribal input is an integral part of the federal decision-making process.
- *Bureau of Indian Education Office of Information Technology and Distribution*: establish an Office of Information Technology within the Bureau of Indian Education to centralize the computer equipment and technology needs for Native American students, school administrators, and teachers.
- *Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) Infrastructure Enhancements*: HPF Funding, in coordination with State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, is a necessary tool to support permitting for any infrastructure enhancements. Congress must authorize a short-term funding infusion to support this important work.
- *Department of the Interior Office of Insular Affairs Capital Improvement Fund*: increase funding for the purposes of updating and rebuilding infrastructure needs in the Insular Areas.
- *Technical Assistance for U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States*: establish a technical assistance program within the Department of Interior to prioritize climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States.
- *Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Parity for the Territories*: allow the District of Columbia and U.S. Territories to receive state-equal funding considerations under both laws.
- *Climate Change Planning in U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States*: establish programs within NOAA to prioritize climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, including a technical assistance program and a research grant program.
- *Migratory Bird Treaty Act*: clarify the Migratory Bird Treaty Act to prohibit incidental take and create certainty for businesses and industry by directing the Fish and Wildlife Service to develop an incidental take permit program. Permit fees would fund mitigation and restoration of habitat important to migratory birds.
- *Working waterfronts*: establish a working waterfront grant and loan program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to preserve and protect coastal access for water-dependent commercial activities.

- *Tribal Coastal Zone Management Act authorities*: provide funding through the Coastal Zone Management Act to improve tribal coastal resilience.
- *National Ocean and Coastal Security Fund improvements*: update and fund the National Oceans and Coastal Security Act to address equity issues in coastal resilience (including expanding eligibility for tribes).
- *Blue carbon*: create an interagency working group and a blue carbon program at NOAA and fund critical projects to protect, restore, and study blue carbon ecosystems; and require an analysis of impacts to blue carbon ecosystems from development.
- *Climate Change Planning in U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States*: establish programs within NOAA to prioritize climate change planning, mitigation, adaptation, and resiliency in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, including a technical assistance program and a research grant program.
- *Land Ports of Entry at Border*: create a pilot project to update land ports of entry infrastructure and reduce emissions associated with vehicle wait times and related health impacts at the border.
- *Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act*: cancel the repayment of loans, including interest, made to a local government in a U.S. Territory under section 417; and waive the non-federal share funding requirement for U.S. Territories receiving funding for disaster relief, long-term recovery, restoration of infrastructure and housing, economic revitalization, and mitigation.
- *Department of Energy Office of Insular Area Energy Policy and Programs*: establish an Office of Insular Area Energy Policy and Programs within the Department of Energy to centralize and align all ongoing and future departmental efforts in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, including the development of comprehensive energy plans, an energy efficient product rebate program, and a renewable energy grant program.
- *Environmental Protection Agency Office of Insular Area National Program*: establish an Office of Insular Area National Program within the Environmental Protection Agency to centralize and align all ongoing and future departmental efforts in the U.S. Territories and Freely Associated States, including a sustainable infrastructure grant program, a renewable energy grant program, and a technical assistance program.
- *Investment in Robust and Efficient National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementation*: Increase funding for robust NEPA review of infrastructure projects, including funding for additional staff to carry out NEPA implementation and additional resources and training opportunities for federal agency staff with NEPA implementation responsibilities. Ensuring a robust NEPA process will be key to building back better. Attempts to “streamline” NEPA implementation and environmental review will undermine critical standards that make our roads, bridges, and other infrastructure safer and better prepared to withstand the effects of climate change.
- *Significant Infrastructure investment for environmental justice communities*: commit not less than 40 percent of infrastructure investments or investment benefits toward environmental justice communities and disadvantaged communities in accordance with President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative.

As Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, I recognize that the challenges to meet the many needs facing this country are great. I stand ready to support you and your efforts to pass legislation to *Build Back Better*.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jahana Hayes, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Connecticut**

Thank you Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves for having this Member Day Hearing today.

The state of Connecticut and my district in particular are clear examples of the critical need for immediate investment in forward-looking, climate change mitigating infrastructure. Almost 70 percent of our bridges are over 50 years old—the fourth highest percentage in the United States. Of the 4,238 bridges in Connecticut, 332 are classified as structurally deficient, with repairs needed across the board. These repairs are estimated to cost over \$1 billion to complete. In addition, nearly 25% of Connecticut’s bridges are considered outdated and do not meet current standards. With some bridges seeing as many as 145,000 daily crossings, the danger that these structurally deficient bridges pose can not be understated.

Our roads are in similar concerning condition. Over two-thirds of our major roads and highways in Connecticut are in poor to mediocre condition. Connecticut’s dete-

riorating roads now cost motorists over \$6 billion a year in unnecessary repairs, accidents and congestion-related costs.

At the core of these issues is chronic underinvestment. In Connecticut, underinvestment has meant that available funds mainly go to basic maintenance and upkeep of our transportation systems, rather than modernization or improvements. Nationally, we know that we have an investment gap of \$2 trillion over 10 years to fix our current infrastructure, meet future needs, and restore our global competitiveness. The longer we wait to invest, the more expensive each project becomes.

For these reasons, I am very pleased to see that this Committee is again taking up Surface Transportation Reauthorization, and is allowing for Members to submit the projects that are most important to their communities. In discussions with our State Department of Transportation, there are several projects that federal funding would catalyze, improving commuting experiences, enhancing road quality and safety, and bolstering local economies. Some of those projects are as follows:

- Interchange improvement at I-691 and I-91: Improvements to this section of highway would reduce congestion for traffic movement.
- Improvements on Routes 63, 64, and I-84 Waterbury Exit 17: This project would address safety and operational concerns associated with traffic delays and crashes at this very busy stretch of highway right outside my hometown of Waterbury, Connecticut.
- Farmington Canal Heritage Trail Construction: Surface Reauthorization funds could be used to connect the Farmington Canal Heritage Trail from Town Line Road north to Norton Park.

I look forward to submitting the highest priority projects to your Committee later this month for consideration. In the broader package, there are a few key provisions that are of the highest priority for my constituents. First, is corrosion, which threatens the continuous operation of roads, bridges, electrical power systems and water systems and exacts a global cost of \$2.5 trillion. I hope to see full inclusion of a corrosion control policy implemented at USDOT.

Second, any infrastructure plan must bring all stakeholders into the fold and allow local municipalities with expertise in their respective regions to be at the table. That is why it is important that we increase funding for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP), which provide states and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) the most flexibility to implement regional priorities. Increasing the allocation to this program will further enhance local authority in determining transportation improvements.

Lastly, in many areas of Connecticut, there is an inconsistency between the metropolitan planning area under the jurisdiction of an MPO and the Census-defined urbanized area. Regional planning areas have evolved over time and represent long-standing inter-municipal relationships and better reflect commute and travel patterns and transportation issues and needs. Census-defined urbanized areas are not consistently reflective of transportation realities. Making sure that our infrastructure system is nimble and able to adapt when needed is key to long term success.

Thank you again for this opportunity to advocate for the priorities of my constituents. I look forward to working with the Committee on these priorities.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Kevin Hern, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Oklahoma**

OPENING:

- *(Briefly explain your background with infrastructure issues, stemming from your work as on the Oklahoma Turnpike Authority.)*
- Years of inaction have allowed American infrastructure to fall into a state of disrepair, to the point that the American Society of Civil Engineers recently gave American infrastructure a grade of D+ on their annual Infrastructure Report Card.
- We pride ourselves on being on the cutting edge of industry and innovation, the preeminent power in the world—and yet we cannot get even a passing grade on our infrastructure.
- Some of my colleagues have decided to expand the definition of infrastructure to include anything they want, turning what has previously been a bipartisan issue into a party-line fight for the first time.
- Our roads and bridges need attention. Bureaucracy has held up long-overdue projects for decades, resulting in crumbling infrastructure—the real infrastructure.

OPENING SPECIFICS:

- There are a few simple fixes to get our infrastructure back on track.
- First, we need to cut the red tape. Bureaucracy is holding up essential projects that would improve our communities. Redundant oversight is killing progress.
- We need to rebuild our bridges and roadways, tens of thousands of which are currently “structurally deficient,” posing dangers to our communities and needlessly wearing out the vehicles that drive on them.
- Rural broadband needs serious expansion, as nearly 40% of Americans living in rural areas lack sufficient broadband access. In the 21st century, access to the internet is not a luxury, it’s a necessity.
- Our inland water systems and dams need a fix, as most are nearing or have exceeded their 50-year design life. In Tulsa, our levees almost failed during a flood in 2019. Had they failed, thousands of Oklahomans would have lost their homes and livelihoods.
 - Local officials have been asking for years to fix the levees, but it took a near-disaster in order to make it happen. This cannot be the standard moving forward.
- It’s irrefutable that our infrastructure needs immediate help. But President Biden’s so-called infrastructure plan has little to do with actual infrastructure. Instead, he’s using the buzzword “infrastructure” to cover for Green New Deal policies and push it through Congress in a one-sided fight that ignores the root of the problem.

LET’S TALK ABOUT REAL INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS:

- In my home district, Tulsa International Airport’s Air Traffic Control tower was built in 1968 and fails to meet present-day operational standards. There is a severe need to allocate funding for antiquated air traffic control facilities. The safety of our workers and citizens depends on this project.
- There is also a need to address the state of disrepair that we have allowed to happen to our waterways, including the backlog of critical maintenance on the McClellan-Kerr Arkansas River Navigation System, the much-needed Arkansas River corridor development, and the Tulsa-West-Tulsa Levee Project, which I mentioned earlier.
- Rather than failing to address the ongoing economic fallout of COVID–19 shutdowns, we should be providing targeted assistance to the industries that the government hurt by forcing them to close their doors.
- The transportation industry—including planes, trains, and buses, were among the most damaged. To name an example, we need to provide targeted, not reckless, relief to the aviation industry.
- When planes are grounded, it not only affects the passengers and the airline that sells you your tickets—it affects aviation manufacturing, general aviation and commercial activity.
- As the Member of Congress who represents the maintenance, repair, and operations (MRO) Capital of the World, this has been difficult for the many, many jobs supported by the Aviation industry in my state.
- Many of our problems would be solved if we would simply get out of our own way.
- State DOTs have been central to the implementation of the Federal-Aid Highway Program (FAHP) for over 70 years and continue to be the best partners in developing our National surface transportation system.
- We need flexibility for states to allocate funding to the projects that are most desperately needed. Let’s let the folks who drive on these roads every single day decide how to use their own federal dollars.
- We must end restrictions to any State’s ability to prioritize funding, such as top-down ‘Fix-It-First’ mandates. Let’s stop playing big brother and give the states what they need to be successful.

IN CLOSING:

- Infrastructure is essential to our everyday lives. A crumbling infrastructure harms every American.
- We all were there on Inauguration Day when President Biden promised unity and healing, but I haven’t seen a lick of evidence to back up those flowery statements. Biden has proven that he doesn’t care about bipartisanship, he doesn’t care about transparency, and he doesn’t care about the truth.
- I’m not holding my breath for any bipartisan efforts from this committee either. You’d rather pass as many unpopular policies as you can before you lose the

majority next year. I should think the majority would learn from their recent losses and remember that the average American does not support this method of governing.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Rick Larsen, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Washington**

Thank you, Chair DeFazio and Subcommittee Chair Norton, for holding today's "Members' Day" hearing. I appreciate the opportunity to share my priorities for a long-term comprehensive infrastructure package. Building on the Moving Forward Act (H.R.2), this upcoming bill must address the needs of local communities, create good-paying jobs, ensure the safety of the traveling public and advance innovation to help the nation achieve long-term economic recovery.

As you develop this package, I encourage you to consider the following policies:

RAIL INVESTMENTS

Reliable high-speed rail grows the economy by providing good local jobs and helping commerce and passengers travel more efficiently throughout the Pacific Northwest. The Amtrak Cascades route connects communities in Washington's Second District with Seattle, Washington, and Portland, Oregon, in the south and Vancouver, British Columbia, in the north. Once complete, Sound Transit's Lynnwood Light Rail Extension will help reduce congestion and provide a reliable commuting option for up to 55,000 additional daily riders. However, the COVID-19 pandemic forced Amtrak to reduce regional commuter services and Sound Transit to slow construction of rail infrastructure projects.

I encourage the Committee to:

- Support legislation that will create a new intercity passenger rail funding program, as was included in the Moving Forward Act. That language made high-speed rail projects eligible for funds, and gave priority to projects that incorporate regional planning and/or have the support of multiple states and provide environmental benefits, such as greenhouse gas reduction and other air quality benefits.

RAIL SAFETY

I recently toured several transportation projects in my district and heard from local officials who are concerned about the safety and congestion issues related to rail traffic. In light of recent derailments and other rail incursions in Northwest Washington, now is the time to boost federal investment in rail safety and strengthen key federal standards.

To ensure federal funding for states and localities, I encourage the Committee to:

- Provide at least \$7 billion for Consolidated Rail Infrastructure & Safety Improvement Program (CRISI) grants for rail infrastructure.
- Include the Passenger Train Safety Act (H.R. 6066 in the 116th Congress) to codify NTSB recommendations made following the December 2017 derailment of Amtrak Cascades 501 in DuPont, WA, such as:
 - Requiring Amtrak to improve its crew skill training, placement of wayside signs and to update safety plans;
 - Calling for a DOT study on how signage can improve rail safety; and
 - Establishing a reporting requirement on positive train control system failures.
- Provide at least \$2.5 billion to build and improve at-grade rail crossings and separations.

AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

U.S. airports are the economic gateways of the nation's transportation network. However, the COVID-19 ongoing pandemic has devastated air travel and airport revenues, making it more difficult for airports to address their infrastructure needs. Washington state's aviation sector alone needs an estimated \$13.6 billion in investment to plan for and build to accommodate future passenger growth.¹

As Chair of the Aviation Subcommittee, I encourage the Committee to:

¹"Building the Economy: Infrastructure Needs in Washington." Association of Washington Business, 14 Jan. 2021, www.awb.org/reports-data/infrastructure-report/.

- Increase funding for the FAA's Airport Improvement Program (AIP) grants to at least \$4 billion and expand program eligibility to include critical infrastructure projects that increase airport resiliency.
- Raise the cap on the Passenger Facility Charge (PFC) to help provide additional funding for airports.
- Increase funding for the FAA's Voluntary Airport Low Emissions (VALE) program and the Center of Excellence for Alternative Jet Fuels and Environment to support U.S. aviation's efforts to combat climate change.
- Include my legislation, the National Evaluation of Aviation and Aerospace Solutions to Climate Change Act (H.R. 5977 in the 116th Congress) to catalogue climate change mitigation efforts in civil aviation, identify barriers to adoption and provide recommendations on next steps.

BRIDGES

The Pacific Northwest's unique geography means Washingtonians rely on hundreds of bridges to help get to final destinations. Unfortunately, my constituents have experienced firsthand the economic damage and personal tragedy of a bridge collapse. According to a recent report, nearly 400 bridges in Washington state are structurally deficient and the state has identified more than 6,500 bridges in need of repair at an estimated cost of \$11.4 billion.² Keeping the nation's bridges structurally sound and traffic flowing requires considerable federal investment.

I encourage the Committee to provide robust funding for the National Highway Performance Program and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program to support bridge repair and rehabilitation projects.

FERRIES

In the Pacific Northwest, ferries are essential to the transportation network, carrying commuters and goods around the region. However, ferries are also among the largest polluters, accounting for 73 percent of Washington state's annual carbon emissions.³ My home state of Washington is taking significant steps to ensure a cleaner passenger ferry fleet. For instance, Skagit County and Whatcom County in Washington's Second District are working to purchase smaller all-electric vessels for their ferry service. States and localities across the country are ready to make the commitment to greener transportation, but still need robust federal investment to support their efforts.

I encourage the Committee to:

- Reauthorize and include at least \$245 million for the Federal Transit Administration's Passenger Ferry Grant Program and the Federal Highway Administration's Ferry Formula Program.
- Maintain my provision from H.R. 2 establishing a zero- or reduced-emission passenger ferry grant program. These grants would fund alternative propulsion powered ferries and the necessary supportive infrastructure.
- Maintain language I championed under the FAST Act to rescind and redistribute funding that ferry systems have not used within three years of the allocation, and to prohibit private ferry systems from receiving public ferry funding.

BUS TRANSIT

Buses are the backbone of the U.S. transit network. However, according to the 2018 National Transit Database the percentage of buses operating past useful life increased by 48 percent, while buses operating past 15 years increased by 104 percent. The preservation of bus transit depends on predictable federal funding, timely maintenance and support for the dedicated workforce. As the nation works to get to the other side of the pandemic, additional federal investment will help keep operations online and bring bus fleets to a state of good repair.

As co-Chair of the Congressional Bus Caucus, I encourage the Committee to:

- Robustly fund the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) Bus and Bus Facilities Program, including a significant funding increase for the Low or No Emission Program.
- Allow for 100 percent federal cost-share to help local transit recover from the impacts of the pandemic.

²"ARTBA National Bridge Inventory: Washington." ARTBA Bridge Report, American Road & Transportation Builders Association, artbabridgereport.org/state/profile/WA.

³Washington State Ferries—Hybrid-Electric Propulsion Conversion Project. Washington State Department of Transportation, 15 Sept. 2020, wsdot.wa.gov/sites/default/files/2020/09/15/WSF-HybridElectricPropulsionConversionProject.pdf.

INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING FOR MEDIUM-SIZED CITIES

Medium-sized cities, including many in Washington's Second District, play a critical role in powering the U.S. economy, but often have trouble competing for federal infrastructure funding. For instance, the City of Mountlake Terrace in my district repeatedly applied for BUILD and TIGER grants for their Main Street project, which will help accommodate significant expected regional growth and the opening of new local transit hubs. Despite a high cost-benefit ratio and broad regional support, the grant scoring criteria favored larger populations, and Mountlake Terrace's population of 21,000 put them at a disadvantage.

To help address these issues, I encourage the Committee to amend some of the Moving Forward Act's discretionary programs—such as the Community Transportation Investment Grant Program, Active Transportation Connectivity Grant Program and Community Climate Innovation Grant Program—to expand eligibility for medium-size cities. Specifically:

- Add eligibility criteria for projects that will help alleviate traffic congestion in medium-sized cities (with populations between 10,000 and 75,000 residents) projected to experience a significant percentage of population growth soon.
 - Allow local metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) to be the agencies responsible for determining this metric.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

In Washington state and across the country, transportation means jobs. Long-term economic recovery is only possible with continued federal investment in and support for the next generation of engineers, operators, technicians, mechanics and other transportation workers. Congress must improve access to STEM-based apprenticeships and career and technical education programs to diversify and grow the U.S. transportation workforce.

I encourage the Committee to:

- Include my legislation the Youth Access to American Jobs Act (H.R. 1197 in the 116th Congress), to help high school students access in-demand jobs related to growing STEM industries by creating a six-year pathway through community college and into a registered apprenticeship. The bill will help prepare students for good-paying jobs in high-skill, high-wage and in-demand industries
- Include my bipartisan legislation, the Promoting Service in Transportation Act (H.R. 5118 in the 116th Congress), which authorizes U.S. DOT to develop a series of broadcast, digital and print media public service announcement campaigns to promote job opportunities and improve diversity in the transportation workforce.
 - Use Census tracts or zip codes to define growth impacts.
- Amend evaluation criteria to also include:
 - Population growth
 - Traffic mitigation growth
 - Housing density
 - Economic impact
 - Job creation
 - Diversity and equity for underserved communities

BICYCLIST AND PEDESTRIAN INFRASTRUCTURE

Washington state was once again named the most bicycle friendly state in the country by the League of American Bicyclists.⁴ To ensure safety comes first for vulnerable road users, local communities depend on federal resources to invest in bike lanes, sidewalks and trails. Federal investment in bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure not only improves safety, it helps increase mobility options and reduce traffic congestion and pollution.

I encourage the Committee to:

- Include my legislation with Rep. Espaillat, the Transportation Alternatives Enhancements Act (H.R. 463), to improve access to federal Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funding for local bike and pedestrian infrastructure projects.
- Maintain language I championed in the Moving Forward Act promoting Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator in state Departments of Transportation to a full-time position.

⁴“Bicycle Friendly America Award Database.” The League of American Bicyclists, www.bikeleague.org/bfa/awards#state.

COASTAL RESILIENCE AND FISH PASSAGE

The waters of Puget Sound and the wildlife that call the region home are cornerstones of Northwest Washington's cultural identity, maritime economy and environment. Federal investment in Puget Sound recovery is critical to protecting endangered salmon and Southern Resident orca populations and helping coastal communities threatened by climate change.

As co-Chair of the Congressional Estuaries Caucus, I encourage the Committee to:

- Provide at least \$3 billion for shovel-ready coastal restoration projects focused on climate change and marine wildlife conservation.
- Increase federal funding to improve salmon and steelhead passage and restore critical habitats. Last Congress, I included language in the Water Resources Development Act of 2020 and introduced legislation with Rep. Schrier (H.R. 7657 in the 116th Congress), to support:
 - Installing fish bypass structures and other infrastructure;
 - Modifying tide gates; and
 - Restoring or reconnecting floodplains and wetlands key to fish habitat or passage.
- Authorize at least \$250 million for a new EPA Program Office for Puget Sound and \$50 million for living shoreline grants to improve coastal resilience.
- Include \$250 million reauthorization of EPA's National Estuaries Program (NEP).

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

For decades, Washingtonians have seen and felt the harmful impacts of climate change. However, challenges such as deteriorating water quality, air pollution and other environmental threats disproportionately affect low-income, underserved and BIPOC communities. I am encouraged by President Biden's recent executive order committing to implementing environmental justice policies and dismantling the systemic barriers these communities face. State officials and local community leaders in Washington state are also working to better support environmental justice communities.

To align with these efforts, I encourage the Committee to:

- Establish an environmental justice strategic plan incorporating more equitable local community engagement, meaningful tribal and community consultation, and federal funding eligibility and prioritization for local projects aiming to reduce environmental health and economic disparities.
- Create an Environmental Justice Commission to adopt more inclusive, comprehensive guidelines and provide necessary technical assistance to strengthen federal and state environmental justice efforts and make recommendations to advance environmental justice goals.

INNOVATIVE MATERIALS

According to the Association of Washington Business, the state alone needs over \$146.5 billion in investment for highways and local roads.⁵ Congress must act to improve safety, promote resiliency and support jobs and local economies.

I encourage the Committee to include my bipartisan legislation with Reps. Cicilline, Young and Davis, the IMAGINE Act (H.R. 1159 in the 116th Congress) to improve research on and expand use of cutting-edge materials in infrastructure projects to improve safety, promote resiliency, reduce emissions and support local jobs.

Thank you for your consideration of these requests. I look forward to working with you and the Committee on these goals and other shared priorities to drive long-term economic recovery, fight climate change and keep people moving.

⁵ "Building the Economy: Infrastructure Needs in Washington." Association of Washington Business, 14 Jan. 2021, www.awb.org/reports-data/infrastructure-report/.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Carolyn B. Maloney, a Representative in
Congress from the State of New York**

Dear Chairperson DeFazio,

Thank you for this opportunity to present you and your staff with the most pressing infrastructure priorities and projects for the district I represent, New York's 12th Congressional District.

The American Jobs Plan affords Congress with the opportunity to address the country's urgent need to Build Back Better following this devastating pandemic. The goal of this package is straightforward—rebuilding the American economy. By enacting it, we will create millions of good-paying union jobs, invest in American workers, and boost America's global competitiveness. It will do all of this while reinvigorating American infrastructure in a way that we have not seen since the 1960's. Additionally, it will begin the work of addressing the urgent climate change crisis. As Chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, you have the ability to mold and shape this transformational infrastructure package, and I look forward to working with you to ensure it becomes law.

Through servicing major residential and employment centers, transportation systems engender economic growth and productivity. As you know, public transportation is safer, cheaper for commuters, and better for the environment. By investing in public transportation, we invest in our nation's future. Investment in public transit is crucial in any infrastructure package, and I believe it is vital that we start by investing in the nation's largest public transit system, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which represents 38% of total passenger trips among all U.S. public transit agencies and services the metropolitan region with the largest economic output in the United States. I respectfully request that as your Committee works to pass a reauthorization of federal public transportation programs you include robust funding to expand New York City's subway system.

In particular, I urge Congress to work with the MTA to fund the advancement of the East Side Access (ESA) project. Currently, the Long Island Railroad (LIRR) is the busiest commuter railroad in the United States, with more than 90 million riders a year. It is critical that MTA expand the LIRR to accommodate increasing demands. That is why I strongly support the ESA Project, which will provide LIRR service to Grand Central Terminal on Manhattan's east side, supplementing existing service to Penn Station on Manhattan's west side and the Atlantic Terminal in Brooklyn. With residential populations in Long Island City booming, I also urge my colleagues in Congress to work with the MTA to construct a subway station at Sunnyside Yard in Queens along the LIRR track so that commuters from eastern Queens have a direct, timely route into downtown Manhattan.

Additionally, a strong infrastructure package would make key investments in transit expansion by funding the expansion of the Second Avenue Subway. The MTA completed Phase I of the Second Avenue Subway in 2016 but has yet to begin construction on Phase II. Phase II construction would make use of tunnels that were bored in the 1970s. The finalization of Second Avenue Subway Phase I has already connected and revitalized neighborhoods across Manhattan and Brooklyn with ridership exceeding projections. Once fully complete, the Second Avenue Subway will run 8.5 miles from 125th Street in Harlem down to Hanover Square in the Financial District, allowing local economies to boom and providing significantly improved public transportation to the residential and professional communities along Second Avenue. This will demonstrably improve the quality of life for residents of New York's 12th Congressional District and represents a key upgrade to the interconnectedness of New York's subway system.

Just as improving interconnectivity within New York City is critical to our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as our response to the climate crisis, we must similarly improve the interconnectivity between American metropolitan regions. Therefore, I believe the House infrastructure package should fund high-speed Amtrak rail between Boston and New York City, so that Americans can travel as easily, safely, and cleanly between regions of the country as they can neighborhoods of a city. This will make travel throughout the Northeast Corridor cleaner, safer, and easier for commuters, and will only bring economic benefits to our nation.

Finally, Congress must provide additional funding for the Gateway Program, which would further increase rail capacity in the Northeast Corridor. As you know, the Northeast Corridor is the most heavily used passenger rail line in the United States. By rebuilding the Portal North Bridge, constructing a two-track Hudson River rail tunnel from New Jersey to Manhattan, and rehabilitating the North River Tunnel, we could greatly reduce commuter delays and congestion, while improving

economic output and ease of travel for both New York City and the entire Northeast region.

I respectfully urge the Committee, as well as my colleagues in Congress, to commit to helping New York complete these projects by ensuring the allocation of critical funding. New transit will be used by millions of people, expand economic opportunity, serve neighborhoods that have lacked transportation alternatives, and take people where they need to go. I applaud your commitment to the revitalization of our nation's infrastructure, and I look forward to working with you to expand investment in new transit projects and build a stronger national infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration of my district's infrastructure priorities, and I stand ready to work with you to ensure we enact a strong infrastructure package into law.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Carol D. Miller, a Representative in Congress
from the State of West Virginia**

Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the policy priorities that are important to my constituents in my home state of West Virginia and request their inclusion in this year's infrastructure package.

We are at a watershed moment with our federal infrastructure. As Congress, we have an important role in ensuring that we can bridge the urban-rural divide through our infrastructure projects. Any highway infrastructure package put forward by Congress must provide flexibility to the states to produce the best results for their individual communities and populations. Especially in rural areas, our highway bill should allow for states to have the flexibility to best help their residents.

Essential to my community, and the Appalachian region as a whole, the Appalachian Development Highway System, known as the ADHS, is an essential part of bridging the urban-rural divide. The ADHS was created in 1965 and 90% of the roadways are now open to traffic. Since Fiscal Year 1999, construction of the highway system has slowed dramatically, leaving communities disconnected and forgotten. According to an analysis published by the Appalachian Regional Commission, completing the last remaining 300 miles of the highway system will enable the economy of 13 states to sell \$8.7 billion more in goods and services per year and add 46,000 jobs to the local economies. I strongly urge the committee to prioritize the completion of the ADHS as soon as possible.

Finally, it is critical for West Virginia, and our country, to look toward the future. I urge the committee to consider the inclusion and support of development of hyperloop projects. These projects are on the cutting edge of technology that could completely transform the ways in which we efficiently and effectively transport people and goods. In my home state of West Virginia, Virgin Hyperloop is currently working with state, local, and university partners to develop a hyperloop testing facility which will make this futuristic-sounding technology a present reality. This project will make West Virginia a leading innovator in the hyperloop conversation and bring jobs to our state. I encourage the Committee to consider competitive grant programs where hyperloop will have access to this investment, as well as codification of the Non-Traditional and Emerging Transportation Technology (NETT) Council at DOT to help accelerate consideration of hyperloop issues at DOT and make West Virginia a hub for this emerging technology.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present the policy priorities that are essential to my constituents in West Virginia, and Americans across the country.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jimmy Panetta, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Chair DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, thank you for holding today's Member Day Hearing and elevating the importance of an infrastructure package that builds on the Biden Administration's vital American Jobs Plan.

When I think about infrastructure, I think about the year that we've had on the CCofC. A year marked not only by a global pandemic but also historic wildfires and storms.

Now more than ever before, we must invest in our communities to build back more resilient, more climate-smart infrastructure to give our communities the certainty they need as they inevitably face the next climate-induced disaster.

We must also pursue an infrastructure package rooted in environmental justice. When I think about communities on the frontlines of climate change, I think about residents of Watsonville and Pajaro in my district who live in constant fear of a flood.

For over fifty years, the Army Corps of Engineers' Pajaro River Flood Risk Management Project remained stalled because of its low "benefit-to-cost" ratio, or BCR, a metric that is biased against low-income communities.

Now what the BCR doesn't take into account is the fact that economically disadvantaged areas do not necessarily imply a lack of economic returns.

In the case of the Pajaro Valley, agriculture is a \$1 billion industry supplying the majority of our nation's strawberries.

But it shouldn't just be about economic returns. The undersized and fragile Corps levees on the Pajaro River have failed multiple times since their construction in 1949, resulting in loss of life and placing thousands of people in harm's way.

By historically prioritizing flood control projects in affluent areas, the Corps has been putting projects that protect property values ahead of projects that save lives.

Now, with this infrastructure package, we have an opportunity to right that wrong. We also have an opportunity to overcome another hurdle in addressing the severe shortage of affordable housing, to invest in community health centers and hospitals in rural areas, and to expand long-term care services under Medicare. Affordable housing was already reaching crisis-levels in the Central Coast, and this has been exacerbated by the pandemic. In order to build back better, we must acknowledge that the fundamental right to housing can only be achieved if we increase access and eliminate discriminatory practices. The bruising pandemic has highlighted the inequities that have long existed in our healthcare systems. We must safeguard critical infrastructure and services, to defend vulnerable communities. These investments will help hundreds of thousands of Americans, including my constituents in California.

Before we embark on any of these, we need to make our definition of infrastructure clear. Because yes we need to build smarter, safer highways, roads, and bridges and I will be pushing for Central Coast priorities in each of those categories. But I also want to note that the Biden infrastructure plan takes a broad approach to infrastructure, including delivering on clean drinking water, renewing our electric grid, and providing high-speed broadband to all Americans. I am focused on making sure my communities, particularly those that have historically been left out of federal funding opportunities, also see those benefits. I look forward working with my colleagues on a package that mitigates socio-economic disparities, advances racial equity, and promotes affordable access to opportunity.

Prepared Statement of Hon. Harold Rogers, a Representative in Congress from the Commonwealth of Kentucky

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

As you begin work on surface transportation reauthorization legislation, as well as a potential broader infrastructure package, I would like to thank you for your work to ensure that all Americans can benefit from our nation's vast infrastructure—whether through building and improving roadways, bridges, tunnels, or other infrastructure projects. Previous surface transportation bills have done a great deal to help the people of my district in southern and eastern Kentucky, as improving our infrastructure is one of the most effective ways to promote economic growth and prosperity. As you begin the 2021 surface transportation reauthorization process and consider a broader infrastructure package, in addition to surface transportation priorities I will submit to the Committee later this month, I would like to raise a specific priority that will benefit those in my district in Kentucky—adding the Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME) to the Essential Air Service (EAS) program. Legislative language for this proposal is attached.

As you know well, the Essential Air Service (EAS) program was created as a result of the 1978 Airline Deregulation Act (ADA). Throughout its history, this program has provided necessary funding to ensure that our nation's small and rural communities continue to have access to our vital air transportation system. In my district, the London-Corbin Airport was designated as an EAS location and provided this vital service to the region until it stopped receiving EAS subsidies in 1985. Since then, as a result of the removal of this critical access point to the national transportation network, southern and eastern Kentucky has experienced direct economic challenges.

The Lake Cumberland Regional Airport (SME) in Somerset, Kentucky is well positioned within the region to provide this critical service to a community that greatly needs this increase in economic opportunity. Having passenger air service access to larger airport hubs from the region will allow for these distressed communities to increase investment, employment, and overall economic activity. In addition to this increase in mobility for residents in our region, it is important to note that Somerset has much to offer with its direct access to Lake Cumberland—a popular tourism destination attracting more than 4 million visitors each year. The communities are in full support of this initiative and the ingredients needed for the successful launch of passenger air service at SME are in place. Airport infrastructure including a passenger terminal, instrument landing system (ILS) approach, and 5,800-foot all-weather runway are in place. Further, airlines have expressed interest in providing this service to major connecting hubs if SME is added to the EAS program.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, as well as my other surface transportation requests, submitted on behalf of the people of the fifth district of Kentucky. I look forward to working with you and your staff on this legislation to ensure we continue to invest in our nation's critical infrastructure needs.

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[DISCUSSION DRAFT]**1 SEC. ____ EAS WAIVER.**

2 Notwithstanding any other provision of law and not
3 later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act,
4 the Secretary of Transportation shall provide a subsidy
5 under the Essential Air Service program under chapter
6 417 of subtitle VII of title 49, United States Code, for
7 the Lake Cumberland Airport in Somerset, Kentucky.

**Prepared Statement of Hon. Michael F.Q. San Nicolas, a Delegate in
Congress from Guam**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, and Members of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, Good Afternoon and thank you for your work in advocating to build a stronger infrastructure system and transportation network for Americans across our country. While this Committee undertakes the important task of reauthorizing our federal government's surface transportation spending you also are providing a transformative opportunity to enhance the quality of life for our Americans living in the United States territory of Guam.

Similar to the rest of the country, Guam has critical infrastructure needs in the area of road repair, with a decade-old Highway Master Plan pricing needed improvements at over \$600MM. Many of our public schools date back to the post WWII era, with at least half a dozen in need of replacement and all requiring long overdue maintenance overhauls at an overall price point estimated at \$1.1B. Our public hospital that serves not just Guam but the entire region of Micronesia as the primary medical care facility has over \$700MM in deferred maintenance needs as determined by the Army Corps of Engineers, and is in dire need of critical overhaul or preferred outright replacement.

Guam wishes to put these on the record for the Committee as considerations are made for the allocation of additional transportation and infrastructure resources. Clearly these overdue investments are not problems unique to Guam, and we look forward to full formulaic inclusion as similarly afforded to all of our other States and Territories in these particular areas.

As a particular focus, to include Member Designated Projects funding, I wish to highlight the need for investment in the public transportation system on Guam, which comprises only of a bus services operation. With a population of 180,000 people occupying 212 square miles, Guam is more densely populated than 48 other U.S. States. Factoring in the fact that we have (pre-pandemic) more tourists per capita than anywhere else in the country (1.9MM/180k), and that we are relocating \$8B worth of military infrastructure in the transfer of a Marine Base and 12,000 personnel and dependents from Okinawa to Guam, this Committee in its expertise and experience would be undoubtedly shocked at what we currently are calling public transportation on Guam.

Today Guam has only 26 buses in the fleet, with 19 of them focused on disability and veteran services and only 7 servicing an island-wide route. We have only 10 bus shelters throughout the entire island, leaving tens of thousands isolated, and none of these shelters are properly climatized for the weather conditions on Guam making wait times impractical. It takes over an hour for a bus to arrive based on agency reports. Our transit operation does not have a maintenance facility capable of meeting current fleet needs nor to meet true fleet demand with an increased number of busses in service. Additionally, the system does not have a centralized operations center, with multiple divisions scattered in different locations.

Further exacerbating transportation realities on Guam is the fact that vehicular travel is more prohibitive as gas prices are at \$4.30 per gallon, taxi fares are too expensive for everyday use, and the absence of national rideshare service providers such as Lyft or Uber have small local operators trying to fill the gaps.

Members of the Committee, we need direct and substantial investment in the Guam public transportation system. We need to centralize operations, establish sustainable maintenance capacity, and increase our fleet and bus shelters tenfold. This will mobilize our economy, help people to be gainfully employed, promote a healthier community with greater access to food and medical care, lower carbon emissions, reduce traffic congestion (and enhance the useful life of federally funded roads), and properly showcase to our international visitors that America is not immobilized.

A priority of this Committee is for non-urbanized parts of the country to be afforded equal attention and equitable funding to achieve its needs. Clearly the lack in public transportation on Guam, especially given our circumstances, challenges, and demographics, present a clear opportunity for this priority to be made whole by funding these projects for Guam and ensuring that no American is left behind.

The people of Guam thank this Committee for the opportunity to present our circumstances, and look forward to your just and favorable consideration.



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Jackie Speier, a Representative in Congress
from the State of California**

Thank you, Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, for providing us this opportunity to share our district's infrastructure needs. I'd like to discuss three main policy priorities today.

First and foremost, I wanted to call the Committee's attention to the overall lack of federal funding for restoration efforts for the San Francisco Bay. A 2018 GAO report cited a lack of federal funding as one of the main impediments to Bay restoration efforts. Rising tides due to climate change threaten to drown the Bay's wetlands and will cause irreversible damage by 2030 unless we act.

The San Francisco Bay is the largest estuary on the West Coast. It provides drinking water to roughly 20 million Californians and irrigation water to four million acres of farmland. It's also home to over 1,000 species of animals, including over 100 endangered and threatened species. Over the past 200 years, 90 percent of the Bay's wetlands have been destroyed by human activity. Despite the impending threats, federal efforts for bay restoration and pollution mitigation have failed to meet the enormous need.

Between 2008 and 2016, EPA geographic programs invested only \$45 million into the San Francisco Bay, while Puget Sound received over \$260 million dollars and Chesapeake Bay \$490 million. That's ten times as much—and the disparity becomes even more pronounced when you consider the populations served. A mere \$6 was spent on the Bay for each resident of the Bay Area, while almost \$30 were spent for each resident living near Chesapeake Bay and almost \$60 for residents near Puget Sound. The House demonstrated its strong support for increased Bay funding last Congress when it passed the San Francisco Bay Restoration Act on a bipartisan basis not once, but twice—both as a standalone, and as part of the Moving Forward Act.

This bill, which I've re-introduced in the current Congress, would help address water quality improvement, wetland and estuary restoration, endangered species recovery, and adaptation to climate change. An investment in the Bay would also provide a much-needed boost to the local economy, which has been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a recent study, every \$1 spent on restoration efforts returns \$2.10 in economic activity. I would urge the Committee to once again include the San Francisco Bay Restoration Act in the upcoming infrastructure package with the same authorization level included in HR 2—\$50 million annually over 5 years.

Second, I believe we must take bold action to supercharge the adoption and production of electric vehicles (EVs) in America. Last Congress, I introduced the Affordable American-Made Automobiles Act to do just that. My bill provided incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles, charging infrastructure, EV manufacturing and domestic battery production—the future of clean transportation. EVs must be affordable for the average American if they are to be ubiquitous. I was thrilled to see policies similar to those in my bill included in the American Jobs Plan. I implore the Committee to prioritize policies that would expand EV production, usage, and affordability in the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization.

Finally, I'd like to discuss airplane noise. My primary request is for Committee to address the 65 day-night average sound level (DNL) noise standard. As you know, the noise standard determines which communities are impacted by airplane noise in the eyes of the federal government, and therefore which communities qualify for federal resources for noise abatement, like home insulation. After hearing from thousands of residents across my district, it's clear to me that the number and location of residents impacted by noise far exceeds the boundary of the 65 DNL. The results of the long-awaited FAA Neighborhood Environmental Survey—also known as the Noise Annoyance Survey—also demonstrate that there's been a substantial increase in the number of Americans who are highly annoyed by aircraft noise. Therefore, I urge the Committee to reassess the 65 DNL boundary and support a noise metric that accurately reflects the magnitude of the problem. Noise is not just a nuisance, it's a serious quality of life and health issue.

Chairwoman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves, I thank you again for convening this hearing and I urge you to please take action to address these three major issues.



**Prepared Statement of Hon. Filemon Vela, a Representative in Congress
from the State of Texas**

Chairman DeFazio, Ranking Member Graves, Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide remarks. As you prepare legislation on infrastructure investments, I would like to highlight several important funding priorities for my constituents in the 34th District of Texas—land ports of entry, broadband, and the Interstate 69 (I-69) system. These issues represent opportunities for major infrastructure investment, which is both necessary and past due.

LAND PORTS OF ENTRY

It is critical that we provide \$6 billion for our land ports of entry (LPOEs). Investments in improving the aging infrastructure at our ports of entry are necessary for a safer and more prosperous America.

As you know, many of our LPOEs have longstanding infrastructure needs that impede both security and commerce. Mexico and Canada are two of our three largest trading partners, and every day, hundreds of thousands of commercial trucks, passenger vehicles, and pedestrians cross our LPOEs on the northern and southern borders. Our LPOEs are in dire need of upgrades to address the considerable increase in trade and commerce with these two countries over the past few decades, and the anticipated continued growth of products and people crossing at our land ports. Improvements of LPOEs will also be an important step in directing federal resources to smart border enforcement efforts.

President Biden has made clear his understanding of the “importance of transforming our crumbling transportation infrastructure—including roads and bridges, rail, aviation, ports, and inland waterways”, and specifically mentioned his plan to “invest heavily in improving the aging infrastructure at all of our ports of entry.” Building infrastructure is a critical part of putting people back to work and reviving the economy. Upgrading the facilities at our LPOEs would not only bring good jobs to local communities and boost our country’s economy, but it would also strengthen our national security and facilitate trade and travel.

BROADBAND

Congress must also provide significant funding to address the severe and ongoing need for internet connectivity in urban minority communities. My district is home to successful small businesses, cutting-edge universities, and a strong workforce poised to benefit from fast and reliable internet. However, many of my constituents have been left behind by the broadband market. According to the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA), the Rio Grande Valley is home to the first, second, and fifth worst-connected cities in America.

As the COVID-19 pandemic has further highlighted, broadband connectivity is a crucial need for South Texas, and we must work to ensure every home has affordable and accessible internet connectivity. We must prioritize funding for urban areas, including municipal-owned networks, and remove unnecessary barriers that prevent local governments from providing this critical utility to their communities.

THE I-69 SYSTEM

Congress must prioritize the continued development of the I-69 interstate system, which will facilitate transportation and economic development throughout the country. This multi-modal network has been an ongoing need for a quarter of a century, connecting ports of entry in the Lower Rio Grande Valley with American suppliers and consumers in eight states.

In order for this pivotal transportation corridor to be fully completed, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) must be updated to allow continued progress on the interstate system. Communities that are a part of the interstate system benefit from increased visibility, transportation safety, and economic investment. We must remove the existing deadline requiring new segments connect with the Interstate System by 2037 and allow the Secretary of Transportation to designate new highway segments, provided all standards are met. Moreover, we should expand the National Highway Freight Program (NHFP) formula funding eligibility to include Congressionally-designated Future Interstates that are in a state’s USDOT-approved Freight Plan, as well as projects that are eligible for Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Project program grants (INFRA). These changes align with the original intent of the system and would ensure communities are able to complete not only the important I-69 corridor, but all future interstates.

Thank you again for this opportunity to provide remarks to the Committee. I urge Members of Congress to consider the importance of these infrastructure needs and include sufficient funding for these priority areas.

